اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 26 **Ash-Shuara**

سُوْرَةُ الشُّعَرَآءِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate**)**

طٰسٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾

(26:1) Ta'. Sin. Mim.

تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾

(26-2) These are the verses of the Clear Book. [1]

(1) That is, the verses being presented in this Surah are of that Book, which presents and explains its subject-matter clearly and plainly so that every reader and listener may easily understand what it invites to, what it enjoins and what it forbids, and what it regards as true and what as false. To believe or not to believe is a different matter; but no one can have the excuse that he could not understand the teachings of the Book and its injunctions and prohibitions.

Al-Kitab-ul-Mubin also has the meaning that the Quran is, beyond any doubt, a divine Book. Its language, its diction and themes, the facts presented by it and the background of its revelations, all testify to the fact that this is indeed the Book of the Master of all Creation. In this sense, its every sentence is a sign and a miracle. As such, any person who has common sense has no need of any other sign than the verses of this Book for believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

This brief introductory sentence, which covers both these meanings, has a close connection with the subject-matter of this Surah. The disbelievers of Makkah demanded a miracle from the Prophet (peace be upon him) so as to be convinced that the message he gave was really from Allah. In answer to that, it has been said that if someone really wanted a sign for believing in the Prophet (peace be upon him), he should study the verses of

this Book. Then, the disbelievers accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of being a sorcerer. This charge has been refuted by saying that the Quran has nothing ambiguous or mysterious in it; but it plainly puts forward all of its teachings which cannot be the creation of a poet or a sorcerer's imagination.

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفۡسَكَ اَلَّا يَكُوۡنُوۡا مُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۝٣

(26-3) (O Muhammad), you will perhaps grieve yourself to death because these people do not believe. (2)

(2) The words bakhiun-nafsaka literally mean: You would kill yourself. The verse in fact describes the extreme anguish, anxiety and grief of the Prophet (peace be upon him) over the Makkan disbelievers' ways of deviation, moral degradation, and obduracy and opposition to his message of reform. Sometimes it seemed as if his grief and mental suffering for their sake would cause his death. This state of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been referred to at other places in the Quran as well, for instance in (Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 6), thus: Well, O Muhammad, it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow if they do not believe in this message. And in (Surah Al-Fatir, Ayat 8), thus: Let not your life be consumed in grief for their sake.

اِنۡ نَّشَاۡ نُنَزِّلۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اٰيَةً فَظَلَّتۡ اَعۡنَاقُهُمۡ لَهَا خٰضِعِيۡنَ ۝٤

(26-4) If We will, We can send down a Sign to them from heaven, so their necks will be humbled to it. (3)

(3) That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to send down a sign which would make all the disbelievers yield and submit. If, however, He does not send one, it does not mean that such a thing is beyond His powers, but the reason is that the belief under compulsion is not acceptable to Him. Allah wants that people should use their common-sense and recognize the truth through the verses of the divine Book and the signs which are scattered all over the universe and are found even in their own selves. Then, when their hearts are satisfied that the message of the Prophets contains the truth, and the beliefs and the creeds which

are opposed to it, are false, they should willingly give up falsehood and adopt the truth. This voluntary belief, acceptance of the truth and rejection of falsehood, is what Allah demands from man. It is for this reason that Allah has bestowed upon man choice and free will, and freedom to follow any way, right or wrong, that he pleases. For the same reason He has placed in his nature both the tendencies, towards good and towards evil, and opened up before him both the ways, to piety and to sin. For the same purpose He has given Satan the freedom and respite to mislead him and has made arrangements of Prophethood, revelation and invitation to goodness to guide him to the right way, and has placed man on trial to see whether he adopts the way of belief and obedience or of disbelief and sin. On the other hand, if Allah had adopted a method of coercing people to believe and obey, it would have defeated the very purpose of the trial and test. Then there was no need to send down the signs for the purpose, but He would have created man with a pure nature, without any inclination for evil, disbelief and sin, and made him obedient by birth like the angels. This has been referred at several places in the Quran, for instance in (Surah Younus, Ayat 99): Had your Lord willed, all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him. And in (Surah Hud, Ayat 118): Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways, but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action). For further explanation, see (E.Ns 101,102 of Surah Younus) and (E.N. 116 of Surah Hud).

وَ مَا يَ ٰٓاِ ِ ّ ذِ كرٍ ّمِّنَ الرَّ حمٰنِ مُ حدَثٍ اِلَّا كَانُواعَ ُ مُ عرِضِ نَ ﴿٥﴾

(26-5) Never does there come to them an admonition from the Merciful Lord but they turn away from it.

فَقَ دۡ كَذَّبُ ا فَسَوَ ٰٓ اِ ۡ ٔ بُؤُا مَا كَانُ ا ِ ۦ يَ ۡ ِ ئُونَ ﴿٦﴾

(26-6) They will soon come to know the truth of that which they have been scoffing at. (4)

(4) That is, the people who show lack of feeling and interest for every rational attempt made to bring them to the right way, cannot be made to believe forcibly by sending down signs from heaven. They only deserve to be shown their evil end after they have been duly warned and shown guidance, which they not only treated with indifference but rejected scornfully. This evil end can be shown to them in several ways.
(1) The truth which they have bitterly opposed and scoffed at should prevail in the world in front of their very eyes in spite of their antagonism. (2) They should be visited by a painful torment and eliminated from the world. (3) Alter a few years of misguided life they should meet death and see for themselves that what they had been following whole heartedly throughout their lives was nothing but falsehood and what the Prophets had been presenting was the very truth, which they had been scoffing at. Thus the evil end can take place differently for different people as it happened in the past.

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلَى الۡاَرۡضِ كَمۡ اَنۡۢبَتۡنَا فِيۡهَا مِنۡ كُلِّ زَوۡجٍ كَرِيۡمٍ ﴿۷﴾

(26-7) Do they not look at the earth, how We caused a variety of fine vegetation to grow from it (in abundance)?

اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۸﴾

(26-8) Surely there is a Sign in this, (5) but most of them would not believe. (6)

(5) That is, the seeker after truth does not have to look far for a sign. If only he sees with open eyes the phenomena of vegetation around him, he will be able to judge for himself whether the reality about the system of the world (i.e. Tauhid) which was being presented by the Prophets is true or the speculations of the polytheists and atheists. From the variety and abundance of creation found on the earth, the various elements and factors supporting it, the laws of nature causing it to grow and flourish, and the accord and harmony existing between its characteristics and the countless needs and demands of

innumerable creatures, only a fool will conclude that all this is happening automatically without the wisdom, knowledge, power and design of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful Creator. Obviously, many masters and gods could not have by any device arranged and produced the perfect harmony and accord between the soil, the sun and the moon, and the animal and plant life produced with their help and the needs of a great variety of creatures living on the earth. A sensible person, unless he is prejudiced and biased, cannot help feeling convinced that these are the clear signs and proofs of the existence of One God, and there is no further need of a miracle to convince him of the reality of Tauhid.

(6) That is, He has the power and ability to annihilate completely anyone whom He wills to punish, but it is His mercy that He does not hasten to punish the wrong-doer, but gives him respite for years and centuries to allow him time to think, understand and mend his ways, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of a lifetime if the sinner offers repentance but once.

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَ ۡ وَ ا ٗ عَزِ ۡ زُ الرَّحِ ۡ مُ ۡ یۡ ﴿۹﴾

(26-9) Verily Your Lord is Infinitely Mighty, Most Compassionate.

وَ ۡ اِ ۡ نَادٰی رَبُّکَ مُوسٰۤی اَنِ ا ۡ تِ ا ۡ ئَ ۡ مَ الظّٰلِ ۡ مِ ۡ نَ ۡ یۡ ﴿۱۰﴾

(26-10) (Recount to them about the time) when Your Lord called Moses: (7) "Go to the wrong-doing people, (8)

(7) After a brief introduction, historical events have been presented beginning with the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, and attention has been drawn specifically to the following points:

(1) The conditions under which Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had to work were much harsher and more severe than those faced by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prophet Moses belonged to a slave community very much suppressed by Pharaoh and his people. In contrast to them,

the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a member of the clan of Quraish and his family enjoyed an equal status with the other clans. Then Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been bred and brought up in the house of Pharaoh and after remaining a fugitive for ten years due to a charge of murder, he was commanded to go before the same king from whom he had fled for life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not have to face any such situation. Then the empire of Pharaoh was the most extensive and powerful empire of the time and the meager power of the Quraish had no comparison with it. In spite of that Pharaoh could not do any harm to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and ultimately perished in the conflict. From this Allaln wanted the Quraish to learn this lesson: None can defeat the one who has Allah to help him? When Pharaoh with all his might became helpless against Moses (peace be upon him), how can you, O poor Quraish, succeed against Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

(2) There could not be clearer and more manifest signs (miracles) than those which were shown to Pharaoh through Moses (peace be upon him). Then in an open contest with the magicians before a gathering of hundreds of thousands of people to meet the challenge of Pharaoh himself, it had been conclusively demonstrated that what was presented by Moses (peace be upon him), was not magic. The skillful magicians who were themselves Egyptians and had been summoned by Pharaoh himself bore witness to the fact that turning of Moses' (peace be upon him) staff into a serpent was a real change of nature, which could only happen through a divine miracle, and not by any trick of magic. Then the magicians' believing in Moses (peace be upon him) immediately, even at the risk of life, proved beyond any doubt that the sign presented by Moses (peace be upon him) was a miracle and not magic. Yet the disbelievers were not inclined to believe in the Prophet (peace be upon him). Now how can you, O Quraish, say that you will believe only when you are shown a perceptible miracle and a physical sign? As a matter of fact, if a person is free from prejudice, false sense of prestige and vested interest, and has an open mind to appreciate the distinction between truth and falsehood, and is prepared to give up falsehood for the truth, he does not stand in need of any other signs than those found in this Book, in the life of the one

presenting it and in the vast universe around him. On the contrary, an obstinate person, who is not interested in the truth, and who because of selfish motives is determined not to recognize and accept any such truth as may clash with his interests, will not be prepared to believe after seeing any sign whatsoever, even if the earth and the heaven are turned upside down in front of his eyes.

(3) The tragic end of such obstinacy as met by Pharaoh is not something for which other people should become so impatient. Those who do not believe even after seeing with their own eyes the signs of divine power have inevitably to meet a similar fate. Therefore, instead of learning a lesson why do you insist on seeing such a dreadful sign? For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 103-137); (Surah Younus, Ayats 75-92); (Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 101-104); and (Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 9-79).

(8) The epithet of the wicked people describes the extremely wicked character of the people of Pharaoh.

قَوۡمَ فِرۡعَوۡنَ ؕ اَلَا يَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾

(26-11) the people of Pharaoh: do they have no fear?" (9)

9. That is, O Moses! Just see how these people are perpetrating crime and injustice presuming that they are all-powerful in the land having no fear of God, Who will call them to account in the Hereafter.

قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّیۡۤ اَخَافُ اَنۡ یُّکَذِّبُوۡنِ ۫ ﴿۱۲﴾

(26-12) He said: "My Lord! I fear that they will brand me a liar.

وَ یَضِیۡقُ صَدۡرِیۡ وَ لَا یَنۡطَلِقُ لِسَانِیۡ فَاَرۡسِلۡ اِلٰی ہٰرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾

(26-13) My breast is constricted and my tongue is not fluent, so endow Messengership on Aaron. (10)

(10) The sentence, “My breast straitens”, shows that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was somewhat hesitant of going alone on such a difficult mission, and also had the feeling that he was not eloquent in speech. That is why he begged Allah to appoint Aaron too, as messenger to assist him who, being more vigorous in speech, could support and strengthen him as and when the need arose. It is just possible that in the beginning, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) might have begged that Aaron be appointed to Prophethood instead of him, but later when he felt that Allah willed him to be appointed to that position, he might have appealed that Aaron should at least be made his counselor and assistant. We say this because here Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is not praying for Aaron to be made his counselor, but says: Appoint Aaron to Prophethood. On the other hand, in Surah Ta Ha, he says: Appoint for me a counselor from my family, (let it be) my brother Aaron. Then in Surah Al-Qasas, he says: My brother Aaron is more vigorous in speech than myself, so send him as an assistant with me to confirm (and support) me. From this it appears that these two requests were made later, but originally Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had begged Allah to appoint Aaron to Prophethood instead of himself.

The Bible has a different story to tell. According to it, Prophet Moses, fearing that he would be rejected by the people of Pharaoh, and putting forward the excuse of his faltering speech, had declined to accept his appointment to prophethood on the pretext that he lacked vigor and eloquence in speech: O my, Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (Exodus, 4: 13), Then Allah, of His own will, appointed Aaron to be his assistant and persuaded them: to go together before Pharaoh. (Exodus, 4: 1-13). For further details, see (E.N. 19 of Ta Ha).

وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنۢبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَن يَقْتُلُونِ ﴿١٤﴾

(26-14) As for me, they hold the charge of a crime against me. I fear they will put me to death." (11)

(11) The allusion is to the incident of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) giving a blow to an Egyptian, who was fighting with

an Israelite, and thus causing his death. Then as soon as Moses came to know that the report had reached Pharaoh and his people and they were planning to take revenge, he fled the country and took refuge in Midian. See (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 15-21). Now when after a period of almost ten years of hiding he was suddenly called upon and commanded to go before Pharaoh, who had already a charge of murder against him, with the message, Prophet Moses rightly felt apprehensive that he would immediately be involved in the murder case even before he was able to convey the message as commanded by Allah.

قَالَ كَلَّا فَاذْهَبَا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

(26:15) He said: "Certainly not! So go both of you with Our Signs. (12) We shall be with you listening to everything.

(12) Here the signs meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which were given to Moses. For details see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 106-117); (Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 17-23); (Surah An-Naml, Ayats 7-14); and (Surah Al-Qasas; Ayats 31-32).

فَاْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُوْلَآ اِنَّا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾

(26-16) Go, then, to Pharaoh and say to him: 'The Lord of the Universe has sent us

اَنْ اَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٧﴾

(26-17) that you let the Children of Israel go with us.'" (13)

(13) The mission of the Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was twofold: First, to invite Pharaoh to the worship and obedience of Allah which has been the foremost aim of the mission of every Prophet, and secondly, to liberate the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, which was specifically assigned to them. The Quran has mentioned sometimes only the first part of their mission (as in Surah An-Naziat) and sometimes only the second.

قَالَ اَلَمۡ نُرَبِّكَ فِيۡنَا وَلِيۡدًا وَّلَبِثۡتَ فِيۡنَا مِنۡ عُمُرِكَ سِنِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۱۸﴾

(26-18) Pharaoh said: "Did we not bring you up among us when you were a child? (14)

(14) This remark of Pharaoh shows that he was not the same Pharaoh who had brought up Moses in his house, but his son. Had he been the same Pharaoh, he would have said, “I brought you up.” But, on the contrary, he says, “You were brought up among ourselves.” For a detailed discussion, see (E.Ns 85-93 of Surah Al-Aaraf).

وَفَعَلۡتَ فَعۡلَتَكَ الَّتِىۡ فَعَلۡتَ وَاَنۡتَ مِنَ الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ ﴿۱۹﴾

(26-19) You spent many years of your life among us and then you committed that deed of yours. (15) You are very ungrateful indeed."

(15) The allusion is to the incident of murder committed by Moses accidentally.

قَالَ فَعَلۡتُهَاۤ اِذًا وَّاَنَا مِنَ الضَّآلِّيۡنَ ۫﴿۲۰﴾

(26-20) Moses replied: "I committed that act erringly. (16)

(16) The word dalalat does not always mean straying away, but it is also used in the sense of ignorance, folly, error, forgetfulness, inadvertence, etc. As mentioned in Surah Al- Qasas, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had only given a blow to the Egyptian (Copt) when he saw him beating an Israelite cruelly. A blow does not cause death, nor is it given with the intention of causing death. It was only an accident that the Egyptian died. As such, it was not a case of deliberate murder but of accidental murder. A murder was committed but not intentionally, nor was any weapon used, which is usually employed for murder, or which can cause murder.

فَفَرَرۡتُ مِنۡكُمۡ لَمَّا خِفۡتُكُمۡ فَوَهَبَ لِىۡ رَبِّىۡ حُكۡمًا وَّجَعَلَنِىۡ مِنَ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ﴿۲۱﴾

(26-21) Then I fled for fear of you. Then my Lord bestowed wisdom and authority on me [17] and made me one of the Messengers.

(17) The word hukm means wisdom, knowledge or authority, which is granted by Allah to a Prophet so that he may speak with confidence and power.

وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ عَبَّدْتَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿٢٢﴾

(26-22) Now this is the favour that you tauntingly remind me of: that you enslaved the Children of Israel!" [18]

(18) That is, if you had not been unjust and cruel to the Israelites. I should not have been brought to your house for upbringing. It was only on account of your barbarism that my mother put me in a basket and cast it into the river. Had it not been so, I should have been happily brought up in my own house. Therefore, it does not behoove you to remind me of your favor of bringing me up in your house.

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(26-23) Pharaoh said: [19] "And who is this Lord of the Universe?" [20]

(19) Here the details that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) went before Pharaoh as the Messenger of the Lord of the universe and conveyed to him His message, have been omitted, and only the conversation that took place between them has been related.

(20) This question of Pharaoh concerned the assertion of Moses (peace be upon him) that he had been sent by the Lord, Master and Ruler of all Creation with the message that he should let the Israelites go with him. This was a political message. It implied that the One, Whom Moses claimed to represent, possessed authority and sovereign rights over all the people of the world including Pharaoh and that he was not only encroaching

upon his sphere of sovereignty as Supreme Ruler, but was also sending him the command that he should hand over a section of his subjects to the representative appointed by Him, so that he should take them out of his kingdom. That is why Pharaoh asked: Who is this Master and Ruler of all Creation who is sending such a command to the king of Egypt through an ordinary subject of his kingdom?

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ ا لۡاَ رۡضِ وَ مَا بَيۡنَهُمَا ؕ اِ نۡ كُنۡتُمۡ قٰوِنِيۡنَ ﴿۲۴﴾

(26-24) Moses answered: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, if you were only to believe." (21)

(21) That is, I have not been sent by any mortal king ruling in the world, but I come from Him Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth. If you believe that, there is a Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe, it should not be difficult for you to understand who is the Lord of all Creation.

قَالَ لِمَنۡ حَوۡلَهٗۤ اَلَا تَسۡتَمِعُوۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

(26-25) Pharaoh said to those around him: "Do you hear (what he says)?"

قَالَ رَبُّكُمۡ وَ رَبُّ اٰبَآئِكُمُ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ ﴿۲۶﴾

(26-26) Moses said: "(He is) Your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers of yore." (22)

(22) These words were addressed to the chiefs of Pharaoh, whom he had asked: Do you hear? Prophet Moses said: I do not believe in the false gods who exist today, but did not exist yesterday, or who existed yesterday but do not exist today. This Pharaoh, whom you worship as your lord today, did not exist yesterday, and the Pharaohs whom your elders worshiped yesterday, do not exist today; whereas I believe in the sovereignty and authority of that Lord Who is both your Lord and

Pharaoh’s Lord as much today as He was your elders’ Lord before this.

قَالَ اِنَّ رَسُ وۡلَكُمُ الَّذِ ىۡۤ اُ سِلَ اِلَ ۡيكُ ۡ لَمَ ۡجۡنُو ۡ ﴿۲۷﴾

(26:27) Pharaoh said to the audience: "This Messenger of yours who has been sent to you is simply mad."

قَالَ رَبُّ ا لۡمَ ۡشِ ۡرقِ وَ ا لۡمَ ۡغۡرِبِ وَ مَا بَ ۡينَهُمَا ؕ اِ ۡ كُ ۡنتُ ۡ تَ ۡعۡقِلُ ۡونَ ﴿۲۸﴾

(26-28) Moses continued: "(He is) the Lord of the east and the west, and all between them. If you only had any understanding!" (23)

(23) That is, You regard me as a mad person, but if you think you are wise people, you should yourself decide as to who is the real lord: this wretched Pharaoh who is ruling over a small piece of earth, or He Who is the Owner of the east and the west and of everything bounded by the east and the west including the land of Egypt. I believe in His sovereignty alone and have been sent to convey His message to a creature of His.

قَالَ لَئِنِ اتَّخَذۡتَ اِلٰهًا غَيۡرِىۡ لَاَجۡعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الۡمَسۡجُوۡنِيۡنَ ﴿۲۹﴾

(26-29) Pharaoh said: "If you take any god other than me, I will certainly make you one of those (who are rotting) in prison." (24)

(24) To understated and appreciate this conversation fully, one should bear in mind the fact that as it is today, in the ancient times too, the concept of deity was confined to its religious sense only. The deity was meant to be worshiped and presented offerings and gifts, and because of its supernatural powers and authority the people were to pray to it for help and fulfillment of their desires. But a deity's being supreme legally and politically also and his right to enjoin anything he pleased in the mundane affairs and man's duty to submit to his commands as to superior law, has never been recognized by the so-called worldly rulers. They have always claimed that in the mundane affairs, they alone possess absolute authority and no deity has any right to interfere in the polity and law prescribed by them. This very thing has been the real cause of the conflict between the Prophets and their righteous followers, on the one hand, and the worldly kingdoms and governments on the other. The Prophets have been trying their utmost to make the worldly rulers acknowledge the sovereign and absolute rights of the Lord of the Worlds, but they in return have not only been claiming sovereign powers and rights for themselves, but have been considering every such person as a criminal and rebel, who has held someone else as a deity in the political and legal sphere. With this background one can easily understand the real significance of Pharaoh's words. Had it been a question of mere worship and offerings, he would have least bothered that Moses (peace be upon him), forsaking all gods, regarded only Allah, the Lord of all Creation, as worthy of those rights. If Moses (peace be upon him) had invited him to serve Allah alone, he would not have felt provoked and offended. At the most he would have refused to give up the creed of his forefathers, or would have challenged Moses (peace be upon him) to have a debate with his own religious scholars. But what caused him provocation was that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was presenting himself as the representative of the Lord of all

Creation and was conveying to him a political command as if he was a subordinate ruler and the representative of the superior authority was demanding obedience from him to the command. In this sense, he was not prepared to acknowledge any other political or legal authority, nor allow any of his subjects to acknowledge anybody instead of himself as the supreme ruler. That is why he challenged the term “Lord of all Creation”, for the message sent by Him clearly reflected sovereignty in the political and not in the mere religious sense. Then, when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) explained over and over again what he meant by the Lord of all Creation, Pharaoh threatened that if he held anyone other than him as sovereign in the land of Egypt, he would be cast into prison.

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

(26-30) Moses said: "Even if I were to bring a Clear Sign to you?" (25)

(25) That is, will you still deny me and send me to prison, even if I present a convincing sign to prove that I am really the Messenger of God, Who is Lord of all Creation , Lord of the heavens and the earth and Lord of the east and the west?

قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

(26-31) Pharaoh said: "Then bring it if you are truthful at all." (26)

(26) This reply of Pharaoh shows that he was not in any way different from the common polytheists of the ancient and modern times. Like all other polytheists, he believed in Allah’s being the highest Deity in the supernatural sense. Who wielded greater power and authority than all other gods and goddesses. That is why Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) said to him: If you do not believe that I have been appointed by Allah, I can present such clear signs as will prove that I have really been sent by Him. And that is why Pharaoh said: If you are true in your claim, come out with your sign, otherwise if he had any doubt about the existence

of Allah or His being Master of the universe, he would not have asked for the sign.

فَاَ لۡقٰی عَصَا فَاِذَا ہِیَ ثُعۡبَانٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ﴿۳۲﴾

(26-32) (No sooner had he said this than) Moses threw down his rod and behold, it was a veritable serpent, (27)

(27) Thuban means a serpent. At other places, the Quran has used hayyatun (snake) and jaann (a small snake) to describe the snake of the staff. The interpretation given by Imam Razi is that the snake of the staff looked like a serpent from its big size and has been called jaann on account of its swift movement which is characteristic of small snakes.

وَّ نَزَعَ یَدَہٗ فَاِذَا ہِیَ بَیۡضَآءُ لِلنّٰظِرِیۡنَ ﴿۳۳﴾

(26-33) and he drew his hand (out of his armpit) and lo! it had become a shining object to the beholders. (28)

(28) Some commentators under the influence of the Israelite traditions have translated baida as white and have taken it to mean that the healthy hand when drawn out of the armpit became white as if struck by leprosy. But commentators like Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Abul Saud Imadi, Alusi and others agree that baida here means shining and bright. As soon as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) took his hand out from the armpit, it made the whole place bright as if by the sun. For further explanation, see (E.N. 13 of Ta Ha).

قَالَ لِلۡمَلَاِ حَوۡلَہٗۤ اِنَّ ہٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۳۴﴾

(26-34) Pharaoh said to the nobles around him: "Surely this man is a skilled magician

یُّرِیۡدُ اَنۡ یُّخۡرِجَکُمۡ مِّنۡ اَرۡضِکُمۡ بِسِحۡرِہٖ ۟ فَمَاذَا تَاۡمُرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

(26-35) who wants to drive you out of your land by his magic.
(29) Tell us, what do you advise us?" (30)

(29) The impact of the two miracles can be judged from the fact that a moment before this Pharaoh was calling Moses (peace be upon him) a mad man, because he had claimed to be a Prophet and had the boldness to openly demand release of the Israelites. He was also threatening Moses (peace be upon him) that if he took somebody else as Lord instead of him, he would cast him into the prison for life. But, after he had seen the signs, he became so terrorstricken that he felt his kingdom to be at stake, and in his confusion he did not realize that he was talking meaninglessly to his servants in the court. Two men from the oppressed community of the Israelites were standing before the most powerful ruler of the time. They had no military force with them, they belonged to a weak and lifeless community, and there was no sign of any rebellion in any corner of the country, nor did they have the support of any foreign power, yet as soon as the miracles of the snake of the staff and the shining hand were shown, the tyrant desperately cried out: These two men want to seize power and deprive the ruling class of their sovereign rights! His apprehension that Moses (peace be upon him) would do so by force of his magic again reflected a confused state of mind, for nowhere in the world has a political revolution been ever brought about, nor a country taken, nor a war won merely by force of magic. There were many magicians in Egypt, who could perform masterly tricks of magic, but Pharaoh knew it well that they were nonentities because they performed magic only for the sake of rewards.

(30) This sentence further shows Pharaoh’s perplexed state of mind. A moment before he was the deity of his courtiers and, now, struck by awe, the deity is asking his servants as to what he should do to meet the dangerous situation.

قَالُوٓا۟ اَ رۡجِهۡ وَ اَخَا وَ ا ۡعَ فِی ا ۡمَدَآئِنِ ٰحۡشِرِ ۙ ﴿۳۶﴾

(26-36) They said: "Detain him and his brother for a while and send forth heralds to the cities

يَ ا۟ كَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

(26:37) to mobilise all skilled magicians."

فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

(26-38) So the magicians were brought together on a particular day at a set time [31]

As already mentioned in Surah TaHa (verse 59), the day fixed for the purpose was the day of the national festivities of the Egyptians so that large crowds of people coming to the festivals from every part of the country should also witness the grand contest which was to be held in the broad daylight so that the spectators could see the performances clearly.

وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنتُم مُّجْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

(26-39) and the people were told: "Will you join the assembly? [32]

(32) That is, besides proclamation heralds were sent to urge the people to come and see the contest. It appears that the news of the miracle shown by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) before the packed court had reached the common people also, and Pharaoh fearing that the people at large might be influenced, wanted that they should come together in large numbers so that they could see for themselves that turning a staff into a snake had nothing extraordinary in it because such a trick could be performed by every common magician of their own country as well.

لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ إِن كَانُوا۟ هُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

(26-40) We may perhaps follow the religion of the magicians if they triumph." [33]

(33) This sentence confirms the idea that those who had witnessed the miracle of Moses (peace be upon him) in the royal court and those who had heard of it reliably outside were losing faith in their ancestral religion, and now the strength of their faith depended on this that their own magicians also should give a performance similar to that of Moses (peace be upon him). That is why Pharaoh and his chiefs themselves regarded this contest as a decisive one, and their heralds were busy moving about in the land, impressing on the people that if the magicians won the day, they would yet be secured against the risk of being won over to Moses' (peace be upon him) religion, otherwise there was every possibility of their creed being exposed and abandoned forever.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ السَّحَرَ ۟ قَالُ ا لِفِرعَوۡ نَ اَئِنَّ لَنَا لَاَ رًا ؕ كُنَّا نَ ۡ ن غٰلِبِيۡنَ ﴿۴۱﴾

(26-41) When the magicians came forth (for the encounter) they said to Pharaoh: "Is there a reward for us if we triumph?" (34)

(34) Such was the mentality of the supporters of the polytheistic creed of the land, whose only ambition was to win rewards from the king if they won the day.

قَالَ نَعَمۡ وَ اِنَّكُمۡ اِذًا لَّمِنَ ا لۡمُقَرَّبِيۡنَ ﴿۴۲﴾

(26-42) He said: "Yes, you will then become those near-stationed to me." (35)

(35) This was then the highest honor that the king could confer on those who served the creed best. Thus, at the very outset, Pharaoh and his magicians manifested by their conduct the great moral distinction that exists between a Prophet and a magician. On the one side, there stood that embodiment of courage and confidence, who in spite of belonging to the suppressed community of the Israelites and having remained to hiding for ten long years on account of a charge of murder, had suddenly appeared in Pharaoh's court to proclaim fearlessly that

he had been sent by the Lord of all Creation and demanded release of the Israelites.

He did not even feel the least hesitation in starting a discussion face to face with Pharaoh not caring in the least for his threats. On the other side, there were the wretched magicians wholly lacking in moral fiber, who had been summoned by Pharaoh himself to help secure the ancestral religion, and yet they were begging for rewards in return for the services. And when they are told that they will not only be given rewards but will also be included among the royal courtiers, they feel greatly overjoyed. These two types of characters clearly bring out the difference between the grand personality of a Prophet and that of a mere magician. Unless a man loses all senses of modesty and decency, he cannot have the audacity to call a Prophet a magician.

قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسىٰ أَلْقُوا مَا أَنتُم مُّلْقُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

(26-43) Moses said to them: "Throw down whatever you wish to throw."

فَأَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(26-44) Thereupon they threw down their ropes and their rods, and said: "By the glory of Pharaoh, we shall prevail." (36)

(36) As soon as they cast down their cords and staffs, these started moving like so many snakes towards Moses. This has been described in greater detail at other places in the Quran. According to (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 116): When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had indeed produced a great magic. And according to (Surah TaHa, Ayats 66, 67): Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic, and Moses' heart was filled with fear.

فَأَلْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

(26-45) Thereafter, Moses threw down his rod and behold, it went about swallowing up all the false devices they had contrived.

فَاُلۡقِیَ السَّحَرَۃُ سٰجِدِیۡنَ ﴿۴۶﴾

(26-46) Thereupon the magicians fell down in prostration,

قَالُوۡۤا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ ﴿۴۷﴾

(26-47) saying: "We (now) believe in the Lord of the Universe,

رَبِّ مُوۡسٰی وَ ہٰرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۸﴾

(26-48) the Lord of Moses and Aaron." (37)

(37) This was not merely an acknowledgment of their defeat at the hands of Moses (peace be upon him) as though he was a greater magician, but their falling prostrate in submission to Allah, Lord of the universe, was an open declaration before thousands of Egyptians that what Moses (peace be upon him) had brought about was no magic at all, but a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Almighty.

قَالَ اٰمَنۡتُمۡ لَہٗ قَبۡلَ اٰذَنَ لَکُمۡ ؕ اِنَّہٗ لَکَبِیۡرُکُمُ الَّذِیۡ عَلَّمَکُمُ السِّحۡرَ ۚ فَلَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۬ؕ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَیۡدِیَکُمۡ وَ اَرۡجُلَکُمۡ مِّنۡ خِلَافٍ وَّ لَاُوصَلِّبَنَّکُمۡ اَجۡمَعِیۡنَ ﴿۴۹﴾

(26-49) Pharaoh said: "You accepted the word of Moses even before I granted you the leave to do so. Surely he is your chief who has taught you magic. (38) Soon shall you come to know. I shall cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides and shall crucify all of you." (39)

(38) This only shows the extreme obstinacy and obduracy of Pharaoh, who even after witnessing a clear miracle and the testimony of the magicians on it, was still insisting that it was

magic. But according to (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 123), Pharaoh said: Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power. Thus he tried to make the people believe that the magicians had yielded to Moses (peace be upon him) not because of the miracle but due to a conspiracy with Moses (peace be upon him) before they entered the contest, so that they might seize political power and enjoy its fruits together.

(39) This horrible threat was held out by Pharaoh to justify his thinking that the magicians had entered a conspiracy with Moses (peace be upon him). He thought that the magicians, in order to save their lives, would confess the plot and thus the effect produced by their falling prostrate and believing in Moses (peace be upon him) in front of thousands of spectators would be gone.

قَالُوْا لَا ضَيْرَ ۚ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ۝٥٠

(26-50) They said: "We do not care, for we are bound to return to our Lord,

اِنَّا نَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا خَطٰيٰنَآ اَنْ كُنَّآ اَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٥١

(26-51) and we surely expect that Our Lord will forgive us our sins for we are the first ones to believe." (40)

(40) That is, we have to return to our Lord in any case. If you kill us now, we shall present ourselves before Him just today, and we have nothing to worry about this. We rather expect that we shall be forgiven our sins and errors because out of this entire gathering we were the first to believe as soon as reality became known to us.

This reply of the magicians made two things absolutely clear to the people who had been gathered together by Pharaoh heralds.

First, that Pharaoh was a dishonest obdurate and deceitful person. When he saw that Moses had come out

successful in the contest which he himself had arranged to be decisive, he concocted a plot and forced the magicians to confess it by coercion and threats. Had there been any truth in it, the magicians would not have readily offered to have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and get crucified. The fact that the magicians remained steadfast and firm in their belief, even in the face of such a horrible threat, proves that the accusation of plotting a conspiracy against Pharaoh was baseless. The fact was that the magicians being experts in their art had realized that what Moses (peace be upon him) had displayed was no magic, but surely a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Lord of the universe.

Secondly, thousands of the people who had gathered together from all corners of the land had themselves witnessed the great moral change that had occurred in the magicians as soon as they professed belief in the Lord of the universe. The same magicians who had been summoned to strengthen and secure the ancestral creed by means of their magic and who, a minute before, were humbly begging Pharaoh for rewards had now become so bold and ennobled spiritually that they would not take any notice of Pharaoh's powers and his threats and were even prepared to face death and extreme physical torture for the sake of their faith. Thus psychologically there could not be a better occasion to expose the polytheistic creed of the Egyptians in their own eyes and help impress the truth of Moses' (peace be upon him) religion in the minds of the people.

وَاَوۡحَيۡنَاۤ اِلٰى مُوسٰۤى اَنۡ اَسۡرِ بِعِبَادِىۡۤ اِنَّكُمۡ مُّتَّبَعُوۡنَ ﴿۵۲﴾

(26-52) We revealed to Moses: [41] "Set forth with My servants by night for you will be pursued." [42]

(41) The mention of migration here does not mean that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites were immediately ordered to leave Egypt. The history of the intervening period has been related in (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 127-135) and (Surah Yunus, Ayats 83-89), and a part of it has been mentioned in (Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 23-46)and (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 46-56). Here the story is

being cut short and only the final phase of the conflict between Pharaoh and Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is given to show the tragic end of Pharaoh who had remained obdurate even after witnessing clear signs and the ultimate success of Moses (peace be upon him) who had divine support behind his message.

(42) The warning that “you will be pursued” shows the wisdom of the instruction to set off during the night. The idea was that before Pharaoh came out with his hosts to pursue them, they should have gone far enough so as to be out of reach of him. It should be borne in mind that the Israelites were not settled in one place in Egypt but were scattered in cities and habitations all over the country and lived in large numbers especially in the land between Memphis and Rameses called Goshen. It appears that when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded to leave Egypt, he must have sent instructions to the Israelite habitations telling the people to make necessary preparations for migration and he must have also fixed a night for them to leave their homes for the exodus.

فَاَ رۡسَلَ فِ رۡعَوۡنُ فِی الۡمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِیۡنَ ۙ﴿۵۳﴾

(26-53) Then Pharaoh sent heralds to the cities (to mobilise troops)

اِنَّ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ لَشِرۡذِمَةٌ قَلِیۡلُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۵۴﴾

(26-54) saying: "These (Israelites) are only a small band of people

وَ اِنَّهُمۡ لَنَا لَغَآئِظُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۵۵﴾

(26-55) who have certainly provoked our wrath.

وَ اِنَّا لَجَمِیۡعٌ حٰذِرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۶﴾

(26-56) But we are a numerous host, ever on guard." (43)

(43) All this shows that Pharaoh in fact was terror-stricken, but was trying to hide his fear under cover of fearlessness. On the one hand, he was mobilizing forces to face the situation; and on the other hand, he wanted to show that he was undaunted and undeterred, for a despotic ruler like Pharaoh could have no danger from a suppressed and slave community which had been living in disgrace for centuries. That is why his heralds made the people believe that the Israelites were just a handful of people, who could do them no harm, but had to be punished for the provocation they had caused. As for mobilization it was only a precautionary measure which had been taken to meet any eventuality in time.

فَاَخۡرَجۡنٰهُمۡ مِّنۡ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُیُوۡنٍ ۙ﴿۵۷﴾

(26-57) Thus did We drive them out of their gardens and springs

وَّ کُنُوۡزٍ وَّ مَقَامٍ کَرِیۡمٍ ۙ﴿۵۸﴾

(26-58) and their treasures and excellent dwellings. (44)

(44) The general mobilization ordered by Pharaoh was aimed to crush the Israelites completely, but God’s device turned the tables on him and drew out all his chiefs and courtiers from their dwelling places and drove them to the place where they and their hosts were to be drowned all together. Had they not pursued the Israelites, nothing would have happened save that a community would have left the country quietly and they would have continued to enjoy life in their fine dwellings as before. But they in fact had cleverly planned not to allow the Israelites go away peacefully, but to attack the migrating caravans suddenly to finish them completely. For this very purpose the princes and the high chiefs and the nobles came out of their palaces and joined Pharaoh in the campaign, but their cleverness did not avail them anything. Not only did the Israelites succeed in escaping from Egypt, but also at the same time the elite of Pharaoh's tyrannical kingdom perished in the sea.

كَذٰلِكَ ؕ وَ اَوۡرَثۡنٰہَا بَنِیۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِیۡلَ ؕ﴿۵۹﴾

(26-59) This happened with them; (but on the other hand), We enabled the Children of Israel to inherit those bounties. (45)

(45) Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that Allah made the Children of Israel to inherit the gardens, water-springs, treasure-houses and fine dwellings vacated and left behind by Pharaoh and his people. This would inevitably mean that after the drowning of Pharaoh, the Israelites returned to Egypt and took possession of the wealth and properties of Pharaoh’s people. This interpretation, however, is neither supported by history nor by other verses of the Quran. The relevant verses of Surahs Al-Baqarah, Al-Maidah, Al-Aaraf and TaHa confirm that after the destruction of Pharaoh in the sea, the Israelites did not return to Egypt but proceeded towards their destination (Palestine) and then, till the time of Prophet David (973-1013 B.C.) all the major events of their history took place in the lands which are now known as the Sinai Peninsula, northern Arabia, Transjordan and Palestine. As such, in our opinion the

verses mean this: On the one hand, Allah deprived the people of Pharaoh of their wealth, possessions and grandeur, and on the other hand, He bestowed the same on the Children of Israel in Palestine, and not in Egypt. This same meaning is borne out by(Verses 136-137 of Surah A1-Araf): Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our signs as false and grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and the western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us. The epithet of the blessed land has generally been used for Palestine in the Quran as in (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 1); (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-81); and (Surah Saba, Ayat 18).

فَلَبَعُ وُ ۚ ۚ ۚ

فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَ الۡجَمۡعٰنِ قَالَ اَصۡحٰبُ مُوۡسٰۤى اِنَّا لَمُدۡرَكُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾

(26-61) and when the groups came face to face, the companions of Moses cried out: "We are overtaken!"

قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّىۡ سَيَهۡدِيۡنِ ﴿۶۲﴾

(26-62) Moses said: "Certainly not. My Lord is with me; He will direct me." (46)

(46) That is, He will show me the way out of this calamity

فَاَوۡحَيۡنَاۤ اِلٰى مُوۡسٰۤى اَنِ اضۡرِبۡ بِّعَصَاكَ الۡبَحۡرَ ؕ فَانۡفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرۡقٍ كَالطَّوۡدِ الۡعَظِيۡمِ ﴿۶۳﴾

(26-63) Then We revealed to Moses, (commanding him): "Strike the sea with your rod." Thereupon the sea split up, and then each became like the mass of a huge mount. (47)

(47) Literally, tawd is a high mountain. It appears that as soon as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) struck the sea with his staff, it tore the sea asunder and the waters stood like two mighty mountains on the sides and remained in that condition for so long that, on the one hand, the Israelite caravans consisting of hundreds of thousands of the migrants were able to pass through safely, and on the other, Pharaoh and his hosts stepped in and reached the middle of the sea. In the natural course, a phenomenon like this has never occurred that due to a windstorm, however strong, the sea should have parted and stood like mighty mountains on either side for such a long time. According to (Verse 77 of Surah Ta Ha), Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded by Allah to make for them (the Israelites) a dry path across the sea. This shows that the smiting of the sea did not only result in dividing the waters into two parts, which stood like mighty mountains on either side, but it also created a dry path in between without any mud or slush. In this connection, one should also consider (Verse 24 of Surah Dukhan), which says that after Moses (peace be upon him) had crossed the sea along with his people, he was commanded by Allah to let the sea remain as it is

because Pharaoh is to be drowned in it. This implies that if after crossing the sea, Moses had again struck it with his staff, the two sides would have rejoined, but he was forbidden to do so. Obviously, this was a miracle, and the view of those who try to interpret it as a natural phenomenon, is belied. For explanation, see (E.N. 53 of Surah Ta Ha).

وَ اَ زۡلَ زۡنَا ثَمَّ الۡاٰخَرِ ۚ ﴿۶۴﴾

(26-64) We also brought the other party close to the same spot,

وَ اَ نۡجَ نَا مُ ۡسٰی وَ مَنۡ مَّعَ ٗ اَ جۡمَعِیۡنَ ۚ ﴿۶۵﴾

(26-65) and We delivered Moses and his companions, all of them,

ثُمَّ اَغۡ رَقۡنَا الۡاٰخَرِیۡنَ ؕ ﴿۶۶﴾

(26-66) then We drowned the others. (48)

(48) That is, Pharaoh and his army.

اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَۃً ؕ وَ مَا کَانَ اَکۡ ثَرُ ہُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾

(26-67) Surely there is a Sign in this, (49) but most of them would not believe.

(49) That is, the Quraish have this lesson to learn from this: The obdurate people like Pharaoh, his chiefs and followers had not believed even though they had been shown clear miracles for years. They had been so blinded by obduracy that even on the occasion of their drowning in the sea although they had seen the sea parting asunder in front of their very eyes, the waters standing like high mountains on either side, and the dry path in between for the Israelite caravans to pass, yet they failed to understand that Moses(peace be upon him) had divine succor and support with him which they had come out to fight. At last when they came to their senses, it was too late, because they had been

overtaken by the wrath of Allah and the sea waters had covered them completely. It was on this occasion that Pharaoh had cried out: I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the Children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 90). On the other hand, there is a sign in this for the believers, too. They should understand how Allah by His grace causes the truth to prevail in the long run and the falsehood to vanish even though the forces to evil may appear to be dominant for the time being .

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَ ۡ وَ ا ٗ عَزِ ۡ زُ الرَّحِ ۡ مُ ۡ یۡ ﴿۶۸﴾

(26-68) Verily your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Ever Compassionate.

وَ ۡ لُ عَلَ ۡ یۡ ِ نَبَاَ اِ ۡ رٰ ِ یۡ ﴿۶۹﴾

(26-69) And recount to them the story of Abraham: (50)

(50) This part of the life-history of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) relates to the time when after his appointment to Prophethood, a conflict had started between him and his people on the questions of shirk and Tauhid. In this connection, the reader should also see (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 258-260); (Surah Al-Anam, Ayats 75-83); (Surah Maryam, Ayats 41-50); (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 51-70); (Surah As-Safat, Ayats 83-113); and (Surah Al- Mumtahanah, Ayats 4-5).

The Quran has specially repeated this part of Prophet Abraham's life story over and over again because the Arabs in general and the Quraish in particular regarded themselves as his followers and professed his way and creed. Besides them, the Christians and the Jews also claimed that Abraham was their religious leader and guide. That is why the Quran admonishes them over and over again that the creed brought by Abraham was Islam itself, which is now being presented by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and which they are opposing tooth and nail. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was not a mushrik, but an antagonist against shirk, and for the same reason he had to leave his home and country and live as a migrant in

Syria, Palestine and Hejaz. Thus he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, because Judaism and Christianity appeared centuries after him. This historical argument could neither be refuted by the mushriks, nor by the Jews or the Christians, because the mushriks themselves admitted that idol-worship in Arabia had started several centuries after Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), and the Jews and the Christians also could not deny that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had lived long before the beginning of Judaism and Christianity. This obviously meant that the special beliefs and customs which those people thought formed the basis of their religion, were not part of the original religion taught by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

True religion was the one which had no tinge of those impurities, but was based on those worship and obedience of One Allah alone. That is why the Quran says:

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the faith, and he was not of those who set up partners with Allah. Surely only those people who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with him. Now this Prophet and the believers are better entitled to this relationship. (Surha Al Anam, Ayats 67, 68).

اِ ذ قَالَ لِاَبِۡ وَ قَوۡمِہٖ مَا تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ ۷۰

(26-70) when he asked his father and his people: "What do you worship?" (51)

(51) Obviously the object of this question was to remind the people that the deities which they worshiped were false and absolutely powerless. In Surah Al Anbiya the same question has been posed thus: What are these images to which you are so devoted. (Verse 52).

قَالُوۡا نَعۡبُدُ اَصۡنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَہَا عٰکِفِیۡنَ ۷۱

(26-71) They answered: "There are some idols that we worship and are devoted to them with constancy." (52)

(52) Though everybody knew that they worshiped idols, their answer implied that they were firm in faith and their hearts were satisfied with it, as if to say: We also know that these are idols of stone and wood, which we worship, but our faith demands that we should serve and worship them devotedly.

قَالَ هَلۡ يَسۡمَعُونَكُمۡ إِذۡ تَدۡعُونَ ٧٢

(26-72) He asked: "Do they hear you when you call them

أَوۡ يَنفَعُونَكُمۡ أَوۡ يَضُرُّونَ ٧٣

(26-73) or do they cause you any benefit or harm?"

قَالُواْ بَلۡ وَجَدۡنَآ ءَابَآءَنَا كَذَٰلِكَ يَفۡعَلُونَ ٧٤

(26-74) They answered: "No; but we found our forefathers doing so." (53)

(53) That is, we do not worship and serve them because they hear our prayers and supplications, or that they can harm and benefit us, but because we have seen our elders worshiping and serving them. Thus, they themselves admitted that the only reason of their worshiping the idols was the blind imitation of their forefathers. In other words, they meant this: There is nothing new in what you are telling us, We know that these are idols of stone and wood, which do not hear anything, nor can harm or do good, but we cannot believe that our elders who have been worshiping them since centuries, generation after generation, were foolish people. They must have had some good reason for worshiping these lifeless images, so we are doing the same as we have full faith in them.

قَالَ أَفَرَءَيۡتُم مَّا كُنتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُونَ ٧٥

(26-75) Thereupon, Abraham said: "Have you seen (with your eyes) those whom you have been worshipping,

اَ نۡتُ وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمُ الۡاَقۡدَمُوۡنَ ﴿۷۶﴾

(26-76) you and your forefathers of yore? (54)

(54) That is, is it enough to say that a religion is true only because it has been held as such by their ancestors? Should people, generation after generation, go on following their ancestors in their footsteps blindly without ever caring to see whether the deities they worship possess any divine attribute or not, and whether they have any power to influence their destinies?

فَاِنَّهُمۡ عَدُوٌّ لِّىۡۤ اِلَّا رَبَّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۷۷﴾

(26-77) They are all enemies to me; (55) all, except the Lord of the Universe (56)

(55) That is, when I consider them, I see that if I worship them, I shall ruin myself both in this world and in the Hereafter. As their worship is clearly harmful, worshiping them is worshiping one's enemy. These words of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) bear a close connection with (Verses 81, 82 of Surah Maryam), which say: These people have set up gods other than Allah so that they may become their supporters. But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship but also become their opponents (on the Day of Judgment).

It should be noted that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not say: They are enemies to you, but said: They are enemies to me. In the first case, there was every chance that the people would have felt offended and provoked, because it would have been difficult for them to understand how their own gods could be their enemies. As a matter of fact, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) appealed to the natural feeling of man that he is his own well-wisher and cannot wish ill of himself deliberately. This would inevitably have led the addressees to think whether what they were doing was really for their good and was in no way harmful.

(56) That is, of all the deities who are being worshiped in the world, there is only One Allah alone, Lord of the universe, in whose worship I find any good for myself, and Whose worship is the worship of one's own Cherisher and Supporter, and not of one's enemy. Then Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) briefly gives the arguments, which nobody could refute, as to why Allah alone is worthy of man's worship and indirectly suggests that his addressees (the idol-worshipers) had no rational basis for worshiping deities other than Allah except in blind imitation of their forefathers.

الَّذِیۡ خَلَقَنِیۡ فَهُوَ یَهۡدِیۡنِ ﴿۷۸﴾

(26-78) Who created me [57] and Who guides me;

(57) This is the first reason for which Allah, and One Allah alone, is worthy of man's worship. The people also knew and believed that Allah alone was their Creator without any partner. Not only they but all the polytheists of the world also have always held the belief that even the deities they worshiped were the creation of Allah, and except for the atheists none have ever denied that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe. This argument of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) implied that being a creature, he could only worship his Creator, Who was alone worthy of his worship, and none else, because none besides Allah had any share in His creation.

وَ الَّذِیۡ هُوَ یُطۡعِمُنِیۡ وَ یَسۡقِیۡنِ ﴿۷۹﴾

(26-79) Who gives me food and drink,

وَ اِذَا مَرِضۡتُ فَهُوَ يَشۡفِيۡنِ ﴿۸۰﴾

(26-80) and Who, when I am ill, heals me; (58)

(58) The second reason for worshiping Allah and Allah alone is that Allah has not become unconcerned with man after creating him and has not left him alone to seek other supporters for help, but has also taken the responsibility of making arrangements for his guidance, protection and fulfillment of his needs. The moment a human child is born, milk is produced for it in the breasts of his mother, and some unseen power teaches it the way to suck it and take it down the throat. From the first day of his life till his death, the Creator has provided in the world around him all necessary means required for every stage of his life for his development and guidance, sustenance and survival. He has also endowed him with all those powers and abilities which are needed to use the means with advantage and given him all necessary guidance for every sphere of life. Then for the protection of human life against all sorts of disease, germs and poisons, He has created such effective antidotes that they have not yet been fully encompassed by human knowledge. If these natural arrangements had not been made, even a thorn-prick would have proved fatal. When this all-pervading mercy and providence of the Creator is supporting and sustaining man at all times in every way, there could be no greater folly and ingratitude on the part of man than this that he should bow down before others than Allah and seek their help in need and trouble.

وَ الَّذِىۡ يُمِيۡتُنِىۡ ثُمَّ يُحۡيِيۡنِ ﴿۸۱﴾

(26-81) Who will cause me to die and then will again restore me to life;

وَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَطۡمَعُ اَنۡ یَّغۡفِرَ لِیۡ خَطِیۡٓـَتِیۡ یَوۡمَ الدِّیۡنِ ﴿۸۲﴾

(26-82) Who, I hope, will forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgement." (59)

(59) The third reason for worshiping none but Allah is that man's relation with his God is not merely confined to this worldly life, which will end at death, but extends to lifeafter- death also. The same God Who brought him into existence, recalls him and there is no power which can stop his return from the world. No remedy, no physician, no god or goddess has ever been able to catch the hand which takes man out of this world. Even all those men who were made deities and worshiped could not ward off their own deaths. Only Allah judges and decides when a particular person is to be recalled from the world, and whenever somebody is recalled by Him, he has to leave this world in any case. Then it is Allah alone Who will decide as to when He should raise back to life all those people who were born in this world and died and buried here, and ask them to account for their worldly lives. Then also nobody will have the power to stop resurrection of himself or others. Every human being will have to rise at the command of Allah and appear in His court. Then Allah alone will be the Judge on that Day, and nobody else will be a partner in his judgment in any degree. To punish or to forgive will be entirely in Allah's hand. Nobody will have the power to get somebody forgiven if Allah would want to punish him, and punished if Allah would want to forgive him. All those who are regarded as intercessors in the world, will themselves be hoping for Allah's mercy and grace for their forgiveness. In view of these facts anybody who worships others than Allah, is in fact preparing for his own doom. There can be no greater misfortune than this that man should turn away from Allah Who controls his life here as well as in the Hereafter, and should turn for help and support to those who are utterly powerless in this regard.

رَبِّ هَبۡ لِي حُكۡمٗا وَأَلۡحِقۡنِي بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ٨٣

(26-83) (And then Abraham prayed): "My Lord, endow me with knowledge and wisdom [60] and join me with the righteous, [61]

(60) Hukm here does not mean Prophethood, because at the time this prayer was made, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had already been appointed a Prophet. Even if this prayer was made before that, Prophethood is not bestowed at request, but it is something which Allah Himself bestows on those He wills. That is why hukm has been translated wisdom, knowledge, right understanding and power of judgment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is also reported to have made a similar prayer. Arinal-ashyaa kama hiya: O Allah, give us the power to see and understand a thing as it really is and to form an opinion about it according to its reality.

(61) “Join me with the righteous”: Give me a righteous society to live here in this world and raise me along with the righteous in the Hereafter. To be raised back to life with the righteous and to attain one’s salvation have one and the same meaning. Therefore, this should be the prayer of every person who believes in the life-after-death and in reward and punishment. Even in this world a pious man cherishes the desire that God should save him from living a life in an immoral and wicked society and should join him with the righteous people. A pious and righteous person will remain ill at ease and restless until either his own society should become clean and pure morally, or he leaves it to join another society which is practicing and following the principles of truth and honesty.

وَٱجۡعَل لِّي لِسَانَ صِدۡقٖ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرِينَ ٨٤

(26-84) and grant me an honourable reputation among posterity, [62]

(62) That is, grant me true renown among posterity. Grant me the grace that posterity should remember me as a good and pious man after my death and not as one of the unjust people,

who were not only wicked themselves, but who left nothing but wickedness behind them in the world. Enable me to perform such high deeds that my life should become a source of light for others for all times to come, and I should be counted among the benefactors of humanity. This is not a prayer for worldly greatness and renown, but for true greatness and renown, which can be achieved only as a result of solid and valuable services. A person's achieving such true renown and glory has two good aspects:

(1) The people of the world get a good example to follow, as against bad examples, which inspires them with piety and encourages them to follow the right way; and

(2) The righteous person will not only get the rewards of works done by posterity who were guided aright by the good example left and set by him, but in addition to his own good works, he will have the evidence of the millions of people in his favor that he had left behind him in the world fountains of guidance, which went on benefiting people, generation after generation, till the Day of Resurrection.

وَ ا جۡعَ لۡنِىۡ مِنۡ وَّرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيۡمِ ۙ﴿۸۵﴾

(26-85) and make me of those who will inherit the Garden of Bliss,

وَ ا غۡفِرۡ لِاَبِىۡۤ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّآلِّيۡنَ ۙ﴿۸۶﴾

(26-86) and forgive my father for he is among those who strayed, (63)

(63) Some commentators have interpreted this prayer of Prophet Abraham for his father's forgiveness to imply that he had prayed to God to grant his father the favor to accept Islam because forgiveness in any case is inter-linked with and dependent upon faith. But this interpretation is not borne out by the other verses of the Quran. The Quran says that when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) left his home at the tyrannical treatment of his father, he said: I bid farewell to you; I shall pray

to my Lord to forgive you for He is very kind to me. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 47). To fulfill this promise, he not only prayed for the forgiveness of his father, but for both his parents: Lord, forgive me and my parents. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 41). But afterwards he himself realized that an enemy of the truth, even if he be the father of a believer, does not deserve a prayer of forgiveness. Thus according to (Verse 114 of Surah At- Taubah): The prayer of Abraham for his father was only to fulfill a promise he had made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him.

وَ لَا تُ خۡزِنِ ىۡ يَ مَ يُ بۡعَثُوۡنَ ﴿۸۷﴾

(26-87) and disgrace me not on the Day when people will be raised to life, (64)

(64) That is, do not put me to disgrace on the Day of Judgment by inflicting punishment on my father in front of all mankind, when I myself shall be witnessing his punishment helplessly.

يَ وۡمَ لَا يَنۡفَعُ مَالٌ وَّ لَا بَنُوۡنَ ﴿۸۸﴾

(26-88) the Day when nothing will avail, neither wealth nor offspring,

اِلَّا مَنۡ اَتَى اللّٰهَ بِقَلۡبٍ سَلِيۡمٍ ۖ﴿۸۹﴾

(26-89) but only he that brings to Allah a sound heart will (attain to success)." (65)

(65) It cannot be said with certainty whether Verses 88, 89 are a part of Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) prayer, or they are an addition by Allah. In the first case, they will mean that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) while praying for his father had a full realization of these facts. In the second case, they will be a comment by Allah on Abraham's (peace be upon him) prayer, as if to say: On the Day of Judgment, only a sound heart, sound in faith and free from disobedience and sin, will be of any avail to man and not wealth and children, for wealth and children can be useful only if one possesses a sound heart. Wealth will be useful if one would have spent it sincerely and faithfully for the sake of Allah, otherwise even a millionaire will be a poor man there. Children also will be of help only to the extent that a person might have educated them in faith and good conduct to the best of his ability; otherwise even if the son is a Prophet, his father will not escape punishment if he died in the state of unbelief, because such a father will have no share in the goodness of his children.

وَاُزۡلِفَتِ الۡجَنَّةُ لِلۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ﴿۹۰﴾

(26-90) (On that Day) (66) the Garden will be brought near to the God-fearing,

(66) (Verses 90-102) do not seem to be a part of Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) speech, but they are Allah's words.

وَ بُرِّزَتِ ا لۡجَحِیۡمُ لِلۡغٰوِیۡنَ ۙ﴿۹۱﴾

(26-91) and the Fire will be uncovered for those who strayed, (67)

(67) That is, on the one hand, the righteous people will be shown the countless blessings which they will enjoy in Paradise by Allah's grace, and on the other hand, Hell will be set open with all its dreads and horrors before the straying people, when they will still be in the Plain of Resurrection.

وَ قِیۡلَ لَہُمۡ اَیۡنَمَا کُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۹۲﴾

(26-92) and they will be asked: "Where are the gods that you worshipped

مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰہِ ؕ ہَلۡ یَنۡصُرُوۡنَکُمۡ اَوۡ یَنۡتَصِرُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۹۳﴾

(26-93) beside Allah? Can they be of any help to you, or even be of any help to themselves?"

فَکُبۡکِبُوۡا فِیۡہَا ہُمۡ وَ الۡغَاوٗنَ ۙ﴿۹۴﴾

(26-94) Then the idols and those who strayed will be hurled into the Fire headlong, one upon another, (68)

(68) Kubkibu in the text has two meanings: (1) They will be hurled into Hell one upon the other; and (2) they will go on rolling down into the depths of Hell.

وَ جُنُوۡدُ اِبۡلِیۡسَ اَجۡمَعُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۹۵﴾

(26-95) and so too the hosts of Iblis, all of them.

قَالُوۡا وَ ہُمۡ فِیۡہَا یَخۡتَصِمُوۡنَ ۚ﴿۹۶﴾

(26-96) There they will quarrel with one another and the erring ones will say (to their deities):

تَاللّٰ ۙ اِ كُنَّا لَفِ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ ﴿۹۷﴾

(26-97) "By Allah, we were surely in clear error

اِ ذ ۙ نُسَوِّ كُمۡ بِرَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۹۸﴾

(26-98) when we assigned to you a position equal to that of the Lord of the Universe.

وَ مَا اَضَلَّنَاۤ اِلَّا الۡ مُجۡرِمُوۡنَ ﴿۹۹﴾

(26-99) It is none but those steeped in guilt who led us into this error, (69)

(69) This is how the followers will treat their religious leaders and guides, whom they served and revered like deities in the world, whose words and patterns of behavior they took as authoritative and before whom they presented all sorts of offerings in the world. In the Hereafter when the people will find that their guides had misled them and caused their ruin as well as their own, they will hold them responsible for it and will curse them. The Quran has presented this horrible scene of the Hereafter at several places so as to admonish the blind followers to see and judge carefully whether their guides in this world were leading them on the right path or not. For instance: As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there; then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one: O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire. Allah will reply: There is a double chastisement for everyone but you know it not. (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 38). And the disbelievers will say: Our Lord, bring those jinns and men before us, who led us astray so that we may trample them under our feet and put them to extreme disgrace. (Surah Ha Mim Sajdah, Ayat 29). And they will say: Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men and they misled us from the right path; our Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them with a severe curse. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 67-68).

فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَافِعِينَ ١٠٠

(26-100) and now we have none to intercede on our behalf, (70)

(70) That is, those whom we regarded as our intercessors in the world and who, we believed, would take us safely into Paradise, are utterly helpless today and of no avail to us.

وَ لَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ ١٠١

(26-101) nor do we have a truly sincere friend. (71)

(71) That is, we have no sympathizer either who could feel for us and console us. The Quran says that in the Hereafter only the believers will continue to be friends; as for the disbelievers, they will turn enemies of one another even though they had been sworn friends in the world. Each will hold the other as responsible for the doom and try to get him maximum punishment. Friends on that Day will become enemies of one another except the righteous (who will continue to be friends). (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 67).

فَلَوْ اَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ١٠٢

(26-102) If only we could return we would be among the believers." (72)

(72) That Quran has given an answer to this kind of longing and desire as well: Even if they be sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 28). As for the reasons why they will not be allowed to return to the world, please see (E.Ns 90-92 of Surah Al-Mominoon) above.

اِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ١٠٣

(26-103) Surely there is a Sign in this, (73) but most of them would not believe.

(73) There are two aspects of the sign in the story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). (1) On the one hand, the mushriks of Arabia, especially the Quraish, claimed that they were the followers of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and were proud of being his descendants, but on the other hand, they were involved in shirk against which Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been engaged in a relentless struggle throughout his life. Then these people were opposing and treating the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was inviting them towards the religion brought by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). They have been reminded that Abraham (peace be upon him) was an enemy of shirk and an upholder of Tauhid which they themselves admitted, and yet they persisted in their obduracy to follow the creed of shirk. (2) The people of Abraham (peace be upon him) were eliminated from the world. If any of them survived, it was the children of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac (peace be upon them). Though the Quran does not mention the torment that descended on Abraham's people after he had left them, it has included them among the tormented tribes: Has not the story reached them of those who had gone before them: the people of Noah, the tribes of Aad and Thamud, the people of Abraham, and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities? (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 70).

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَ ُ۬وَ ا عَزِ ۡ ز ُ الرَّحِ ۡ مُ ۡ ي ١٠٤ ٪

(26-104) Verily Your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Ever Compassionate.

کَذَّبَ قَ ۡ وُ ۡ مُ نُ ۡ وح ا ِ ۡ مُ ۡ ل ۡ طِ ۡ ر ۡ سَ ۡ ي ١٠٥

(26-105) The people of Noah (74) gave the lie to the Messengers. (75)

(74) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 59-64); (Surah Younus, Ayats 71-73); (Surah Houd, Ayats 25-48); (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 3); (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 76-77); (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 23-30); and (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 37). For the details of the story of Prophet Noah, see (Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 15);

(Surah As-Safat, Ayats 75-82); (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 9-15) and Surah Nooh itself.

(75) Though they had rejected only one Messenger, it amounted to rejecting all the messengers because all of them had brought one and the same message from Allah. This is an important fact which the Quran has mentioned over and over again in different ways. Thus, even those people who rejected just one Prophet have been regarded as unbelievers though they believed in all other Prophets, for the simple reason that the believer in the truth of one Messenger cannot deny the same truth in other cases unless he does so on account of racial prejudice, imitation of elders, etc.

اِذۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ اَخُوۡهُمۡ نُوۡحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۶﴾

(26-106) Recall when their brother Noah said to them: "Do you have no fear? (76)

(76) The initial address of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) to his people, as mentioned at other places in the Quran, was as follows: O my people, worship Allah alone, you have no deity other than Him. Are you not afraid (of Him)? (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 23); and Worship Allah and fear Him and obey me. (Surah Nuh, Ayat 3). That is, are you not afraid of the consequences of adopting an attitude of rebellion against Allah and worshiping others than Him?

اِنِّىۡ لَكُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ اَمِيۡنٌ ﴿۱۰۷﴾

(26-107) I am a trustworthy Messenger to you; (77)

(77) It has two meanings. (1) I present before you nothing but what Allah reveals to me. (2) I am a Messenger whom you have already known to be a trustworthy and honest and righteous man. When I have been honest and true in my dealings with you, how can I be dishonest and untrustworthy in conveying the message of God? Therefore, you should rest assured that whatever I am presenting is the truth.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰ ۟ وَ اَطِ ۡ یعُوۡنِ ۱۰۸

(26-108) so fear Allah and obey me. (78)

(78) That is, when I am a truthful and trustworthy Messenger, you are duty-bound to obey me alone as against all other patrons, and carry out my commands and instructions, because I represent the will of God. Obedience to me is in fact obedience to God and disobedience to me is disobedience to Him. In other words, the people are not only required to accept a Messenger as a true Messenger sent by Allah, but it inevitably implies that they have to obey him and follow his Law against all other laws. To reject a Prophet, or to disobey him after accepting him as a Prophet, is tantamount to rebellion against God, which inevitably leads to His wrath. The words “fear Allah” are, therefore, a warning that every hearer should clearly understand the consequences of rejecting the message of a Messenger or of disobeying his commands.

وَ مَ ۤا اَسۡـَٔـلُکُمۡ عَلَیۡ ہِ مِنۡ اَجۡرٍ ۚ اِنۡ اَجۡرِیَ اِلَّا عَلٰی رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ ۱۰۹

(26-109) I seek of you no reward for this: my reward is with none except the Lord of the Universe. (79)

(79) This is the second of the two arguments of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) about the truth of his message, the first being that they had known him as a trustworthy man during his earlier life, which he had lived among them. This second argument implies this: I do not have any selfish motive or personal interest in conveying the message which I am propagating day and night in spite of all sorts of opposition and antagonism from you. At least you should understand this that 1 am sincere in my invitation, and am presenting honestly only that which I believe to be the truth and in following which I see the true success and well-being of humanity at large. I have no personal motive in this that I should fabricate falsehood to fool the people.

These two arguments are among the most important arguments which the Quran has advanced repeatedly as proofs of the truthfulness of the Prophets, and which it presents as criterion for judging Prophethood. A man who before Prophethood has lived a life in a society and has always been found to be honest, truthful and righteous, cannot be doubted even by a prejudiced person that he would suddenly start fabricating falsehood in the name of Allah and making people believe that he has been appointed a Prophet by Him, whereas he has not been. More important than that, such a lie cannot be fabricated with a good intention unless somebody has a selfish motive attached to this kind of fraud. And even when a person indulges in this sort of fraud, he cannot hide it completely from the people. The foul means and devices adopted by him to promote his business become known and all the various selfish interests and gains become all too apparent. Contrary to this, the personal life of a Prophet is full of moral excellencies. It has no trace of the employment of foul means and devices. Not to speak of any personal interest, he expends whatever he has for the cause of a mission which to all appearances is fruitless. No person who possesses any common sense and also has a sense of justice, can ever imagine that a sensible man who was leading a perfectly peaceful life, would come out all of a sudden with a false claim, when such a false claim does not do him any good, but on the contrary, demands all his money, time and energy and earns him nothing in return but the antagonism and hostility of the whole world. Sacrifice of personal interests is the foremost proof of a man’s sincerity; therefore, doubting the intentions and sincerity of a person who has been sacrificing his personal interests for years and years can only be the pastime of the one who himself is selfish and insincere. See (E.N. 70 of Surah Al-Mominoon).

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰ ۟ وَ اَطِ ۡ عُ ۡ نِ ۡ و ۱۱۰ ۙ

(26-110) So fear Allah and obey me." (80)

(80) Repetition of this sentence is not without reason. In the first case (Verse 108), it implied this: You should fear Allah if you treat as false a true and trustworthy Messenger from Him, whom

you yourselves have been regarding as a true and trustworthy man in the past. Here it means: You should fear Allah if you doubt the intention of a person who is working sincerely only for the reformation of the people without any personal interest. This thing has been stressed because the chiefs of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) people, in order to find fault with his message of truth, accused him of struggling merely for his personal superiority: He merely intends to obtain superiority over you. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 24).

قَالُ وا۟ا لَوُ مِنُ لَکَ وَ اتَّبَعَکَ ؤ ٓ ا لنَزُلُونَو ١١١ أ

(26-111) They answered: "Shall we accept you even though it is the meanest of people who follow you?" (81)

(81) This answer to Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) message of truth was given by the chiefs, elders and nobles of his people as mentioned in (Surah Hud, Ayat 27). In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message: said, We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves, and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration, and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us. This shows that those who believed in Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) were mostly the poor people, and ordinary workmen, or some youth who enjoyed no position in society. As for the influential and rich people, they had become his bitter opponents, and were trying by every trick and allurement to keep the common man behind them. One of the arguments they advanced against Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was this: Had there been some weight and substance in Noah's message, the rich people, scholars, religious divines, nobles and wise people of the community should have accepted it, but none of them has believed in him; the only people to follow him are the foolish people belonging to the lowest stratum of society, who have no common-sense. Now how can the noble and high ranking people like us join the company of the common people?

Precisely the same thing was being said by the unbelieving Quraish about the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. Abu Sufyan in reply to the questions asked by Heraclius had said: Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been followed by the poor and weak of our people. What they seemed to be thinking was that truth was that which was considered as truth by the chiefs and elders of the community, for only they had the necessary common-sense and power of judgment. As for the common people, their being common was a proof that they lacked sense and judgment. As such, if a thing was accepted by them but rejected by the chiefs, it meant that the thing itself was without worth and value. The disbelievers of Makkah even went further. They argued that a Prophet could not be a common man. If God had to appoint a Prophet, He would have appointed a great chief to be a Prophet. They say: why has not the Quran been sent down to a prominent man of our two cities (Makkah and Taif)? (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 31).

قَالَ وَ مَا عِ لۡمِی بِمَا كَانُوا یَعۡمَلُونَ ۱۱۲

(26-112) Noah said: "What knowledge do I have about their deeds?

اِنۡ حِسَابُهُمۡ اِلَّا عَلٰی رَبِّیۡ لَوۡ تَشۡعُرُونَ ۱۱۳

(26-113) It is only for my Lord to take account of them. Would that you made use of your understanding! (82)

(82) This is the first answer to their objection, which was based on the assumption that the poor people belonging to the working classes and lower social strata who performed humble duties, did not possess any mental maturity and were without intelligence and common sense. Therefore, their belief was without any rational basis, and so unreliable, and their deeds were of no value at all. To this Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) replies: I have no means of judging the motives and assessing the worth of the deeds of the people who accept my message and act accordingly. This is not my concern but the responsibility of God.

وَ مَاۤ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الۡمُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ۱۱۴

(26-114) It is not for me to repel those who choose to believe.

اِنۡ اَنَا اِلَّا نَذِیۡرٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ۱۱۵

(26-115) I am none but a plain warner." (83)

(83) This is the second answer to their objection, which implied that since those who were gathering around Noah (peace be upon him) as believers, belonged to the lowest social strata, none of the nobles would like to join them, as if to say: O Noah, should we believe in you in order to be counted among the low-ranking people like the slaves and servants and workmen? To this Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) answers: How can I adopt this irrational attitude that I should attend earnestly to those who do not like to listen to me, but drive away those who have believed

and followed me? I am simply, a warner, who has declared openly that the way you are following is wrong and will lead you to ruin, and the way that I am inviting to is the way of salvation far all. Now it is up to you whether you heed my warning and adopt the right path, or go on following blindly the way to your ruin. It does not behoove me that I should start inquiring into the castes and ancestry and trades of the people who have heeded my warning and adopted the right path. They might be mean in your sight, but I cannot drive them away and wait to see when the nobles will give up the path of destruction and adopt the way of salvation and success instead.

Precisely the same thing was going on between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah when these verses were revealed, and one can fully understand why the dialogue between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of his people, has been related here. The chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah thought exactly the same way. They said how they could sit side by side with the slaves like Bilal, Ammar and Suhaib and other men of the working class, as if to say: Unless these poor people are turned out, there can be no possibility that the nobles may consider to become believers; it is impossible that the master and the slave should stand shoulder to shoulder with each other. In answer to this the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded by Allah to tell the vain and arrogant disbelievers plainly that the poor believers could not be driven out of Islam just for their sake: O Muhammad, you attend earnestly to him who has shown indifference (to your message), whereas you have no responsibility if he does not reform himself; and the one who comes to you earnestly, fearing Allah, to him you pay no attention. Nay, this indeed is an admonition, so let him, who wills, accept it. (Surah Abasa, Ayats 5-12).

And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favor. You are not in any way accountable for them, nor are they in any way accountable for you: so, if you should drive them away, you shall be counted among the unjust. As a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means of test for others, so that,

seeing them, they should say: Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings? Yes, does Allah not know His grateful servants better than they? (Surah Al-Anam, Ayats 52-53).

قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰنُوْحُ لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُوْمِيْنَ ١١٦

(26-116) They said: "O Noah! If you do not desist, you will certainly become one of the accursed." (84)

(84) The words in the text may have two meanings. (1) You will be stoned to death. (2) You will be showered with abuses from all sides, and cursed and reviled wherever you go.

قَالَ رَبِّ اِنَّ قَوْمِيْ كَذَّبُوْنِ ١١٧

(26-117) He said: "My Lord! My people have branded me a liar. (85)

(85) That is, they have rejected me completely and absolutely and now there is no hope of their becoming believers. Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that just after this conversation between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of his people, and the rejection of his message by them, the Prophet submitted a report to Allah that his people had rejected him and now He should settle the accounts between them. The Quran has mentioned at different places the details of the long struggle that went on for centuries between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and his people, who persisted in unbelief. According to (Verse 14 of Surah Al-Ankabut), the struggle continued for 950 years: He (Noah) remained among them for a thousand years save fifty years. Prophet Noah during this long period studied their collective behavior, generation after generation, and came to the conclusion that they had no inclination to accept the truth, and formed the opinion that in their future generations also there was no hope of anybody becoming a believer and adopting the righteous attitude: My Lord, if You should leave them, they will lead Your servants astray, and they will bear as children none but sinners and disbelievers. (Surah

Noah, Ayat 27). Allah Himself confirmed this opinion of Noah, saying: No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not grieve at their misdeeds. (Sura Hud, Ayat 36).

فَٱفۡتَحۡ بَيۡنِي وَبَيۡنَهُمۡ فَتۡحٗا وَنَجِّنِي وَمَن مَّعِيَ مِنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ١١٨

(26-118) So pass a clear judgement between me and them and rescue me and the believers with me." (86)

(86) You should not only give Your judgment as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong, but deliver Your Judgment in such a manner that the followers of the truth are saved and the followers of falsehood are completely annihilated from the earth.

فَاَ نۡجَيۡنٰهُ وَ مَنۡ مَّعَهٗ فِى الۡفُلۡكِ الۡمَشۡحُوۡنِ ﴿۱۱۹﴾

(26-119) Thereafter We rescued him and those who were with him in the laden Ark (87)

(87) Laden ship: because the ship became loaded with the believers and the pairs of animals from every species. For further details, see Surah Houd, Ayat 40.

ثُمَّ اَغۡرَقۡنَا بَعۡدُ الۡبٰقِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾

(26-120) and drowned the rest.

اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۱﴾

(26-121) Surely there is a Sign in this, but most of them would not believe.

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الۡعَزِيۡزُ الرَّحِيۡمُ ﴿۱۲۲﴾٪

(26-122) Verily Your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Ever Compassionate.

كَذَّبَتۡ عَادُ نِ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۳﴾

(26-123) The Ad gave the lie to the Messengers. (88)

(88) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 65-72); (Surah Houd, Ayats 50-60); and for further details of this story, see (Surah HaMim Sajdah, Ayats 13-16); (Surah Al- Ahqaf, Ayats 21-26); (Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 41,45); (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 18-22); (Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 4-8); and (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayats 6-8).

اِذۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ اَخُوۡهُمۡ هُوۡدٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۴﴾

(26-124) Recall, when their brother Hud said to them: (89) "Have you no fear?

(89) In order to understand this discourse of Prophet Houd fully, we should keep in mind the various details about the people of Aad which the Quran has given at different places: For instance, it says:

(1) After the destruction of the people of Noah (Peace be upon him), the Aad were given power and prominence in the world: Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you the successors. (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 69).

(2) Physically they were very robust and powerful people: And made you very robust. (Surah Al-Aaaf, Ayat 69).

(3) They had no parallel as a nation in the world: The like of which was not created in the lands. (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 8).

(4) They were civilized and were well-known in the world for their great skill and art in erecting lofty buildings with tall columns: Have you not seen what your Lord did with Aad Iram, of lofty columns? (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 6, 7).

(5) This material progress and physical power had made them arrogant and vain: As for Aad, they deviated from the right path and adopted an arrogant attitude in the land and said: Who is mightier than us in power? (Surah Ha Mim Sajdah, Ayat 15) .

(6) Their political power was in the hands of a few tyrants before whom none could dare raise his voice: And they followed and obeyed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth. (Surah Houd, Ayat 59).

(7) They were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah, but were involved in shirk; they only denied that Allah alone should be worshiped and none else: They said (to Houd), Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our elders have been worshiping? (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 70).

اِنِّیۡ لَکُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ اَمِیۡنٌ ﴿۱۲۵﴾

(26-125) I am a trustworthy Messenger to you.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰہَ وَ اَطِیۡعُوۡنِ ﴿۱۲۶﴾

(26-126) So fear Allah and obey me.

وَ مَآ اَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ مِنۡ اَجۡرٍ ۚ اِنۡ اَجۡرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۱۲۷

(26-127) I seek of you no reward for this; my reward is with none but the Lord of the Universe.

اَتَبۡنُوۡنَ بِكُلِّ رِيۡعٍ اٰيَةً تَعۡبَثُوۡنَ ۱۲۸

(26-128) What, you build a monument on every hill merely for fun (90)

(90) That is, you build grand buildings merely to show off your wealth and power, whereas they have no use and purpose except that they stand as monuments to your grandeur and glory.

وَ تَتَّخِذُوۡنَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَخۡلُدُوۡنَ ۱۲۹

(26-129) and erect huge palaces as though you will live for ever, (91)

(91) That is, though you have built other buildings also for dwelling purposes, in order to make them grand, beautiful and strong, you expend your wealth and mental and physical abilities in a manner as if you were going to live forever, and there was no purpose of life except seeking of comfort and pleasure and nothing beyond this worldly life which might deserve your attention.

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that extravagance in architecture is not a solitary vice in a people. This happens as a result of a people’s becoming affluent and then crazy for selfish gains and materialistic pursuits. When a people reach such a stage, their whole social system becomes corrupted and polluted. Prophet Houd’s (peace be upon him) criticism of his people’s extravagant and luxurious architecture was not simply aimed at the high castles and monuments, but he was actually criticizing their corrupt civilization and social system, whose glaring symptoms could be seen everywhere in the land in the shape of castles and monuments.

وَ اِذَا بَطَشۡتُمۡ بَطَشۡتُمۡ جَبَّارِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳۰﴾

(26-130) and when you strike you strike like tyrants? (92)

(92) That is, in order to meet the demands of your ever rising standards of life, you do not rest content with small living quarters but you build castles and fortresses, and yet being unsatisfied you erect lofty edifices unnecessarily just for ostentation. But as human beings you have become so depraved that there is no mercy in your hearts for the weak, no justice for the poor, and all people of lower social strata, living inside or around your land, are being oppressed tyrannically and none is safe from your barbarities.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيۡعُوۡنِ ﴿۱۳۱﴾

(26-131) So fear Allah and obey me.

وَ اتَّقُوا الَّذِىۡۤ اَمَدَّكُمۡ بِمَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳۲﴾

(26-132) Have fear of Him Who has provided you with all the (good) things you know;

اَمَدَّكُمۡ بِاَنۡعَامٍ وَّ بَنِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳۳﴾

(26:133) Who has provided you with flocks and children

وَ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُيُوۡنٍ ﴿۱۳۴﴾

(26-134) and with gardens and springs.

اِنِّىۡۤ اَخَافُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ عَذَابَ يَوۡمٍ عَظِيۡمٍ ﴿۱۳۵﴾

(26-135) I fear for you the chastisement of an Awesome Day."

قَالُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ اَوَعَظْتَ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْوٰعِظِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۶﴾

(26-136) They replied: "It is all the same for us whether you admonish us or not.

اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا خُلُقُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۷﴾

(26-137) This has been happening all along. (93)

(93) This can have two meanings. (1) Whatever we are doing is not new but has been happening from the time of our elders since centuries: they had the same creed, the same way of life, the same morality and the same kind of dealings and yet they remained unharmed and safe from every calamity. If there was any evil in this way of life, we should have met the doom with which you are threatening us. (2) The things you are preaching have also been preached and said before by religious maniacs and so-called moralists, but they could not change the ways of the world. It has never happened that the world suffered a disaster only because people refused to listen to preachers like you.

وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿۱۳۸﴾

(26-138) We will not be subjected to any chastisement."

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

(26-139) and We destroyed them. (94) Eventually they gave the lie to him Surely there is a Sign in this, but most of them would not believe.

(94) According to the Quran, the people of Aad were destroyed by a violent windstorm. When they saw it advancing towards their valleys, they rejoiced with the hope that those were dense clouds which would bring much rain for them, but in reality it was Allah's scourge. The windstorm continued to rage for eight days and seven nights and destroyed everything. The people were swept away like straw and everything on which the hot, dry wind blew was left rotting. The storm did not abate until the last man of the wicked tribe had met his doom. Only ruins of their habitations remained to tell the tale of their terrible fate, and today even the ruins have become extinct. The whole territory of Ahqaf has turned into dreadful desert dunes. For details, see (E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٤٠﴾

(26-140) Verily your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Most Compassionate.

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

(26-141) The Thamud gave the lie to the Messengers. (95)

(95) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 73-79); (Surah Houd, Ayats 61-68); (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 80-84); (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 59); and for further details, see (Surah An-Naml, Ayats 45-53); (Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 43- 45); (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 23-31); (Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 4-5); (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 9); and (Surah Ash-Shams, Ayat 11).

Thamud achieved power and glory after the destruction of Aad and as far as progress in civilization is concerned, they followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. In their case, too,

the standards of living went on rising higher and higher and the standards of humanity continued to fall lower and lower, suffering one deterioration after the other. On the one hand, they erected large edifices on the plains and hewed beautiful houses out of the hills like those in the caves of Ellora and Ajanta in India, and on the other hand, they became addicted to idol-worship and the land was filled with tyranny and oppression. The worst men became leaders and rulers in the land. As such, Prophet Salih's (peace be upon him) message of truth only appealed to the weak people belonging to the lower social strata and the people of the upper classes refused to believe in him.

اِذۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ اَخُوۡهُمۡ صٰلِحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۱۴۲﴾

(26-142) Recall when their brother Salih said to them: "Have you no fear?"

اِنِّیۡ لَکُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ اَمِیۡنٌ ﴿۱۴۳﴾

(26-143) "I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. (96)

(96) According to the Quran, the people of Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) themselves admitted that he was a man of great integrity and extraordinary caliber: They said, O Salih, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations. (Surah Houd, Ayat 62).

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰ ۟ وَ اَطِ یۡعُوۡنِ ﴿۱۴۴﴾

(26-144) So fear Allah and obey me.

وَ مَ ۤا اَسۡـَٔـلُکُمۡ عَلَیۡ ہِ مِ نۡ اَجۡ رٍ ۚ اِ نۡ اَجۡ رِیَ اِلَّا عَلٰی رَبِّ الۡ عٰلَمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۴۵﴾

(26-145) I ask of you no reward. My reward is with none but the Lord of the Universe.

اَتُ تۡ رَکُ وۡ نَ فِیۡ مَا ہٰۤ اٰمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۱۴۶﴾

(26-146) Do you believe that you will be left here to live securely in the present state [97]

(97) That is, do you consider that your life of indulgence and pleasure is everlasting, and you will never be asked to account for Allah’s favors to you and for your own misdeeds?

فِیۡ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُیُوۡنٍ ﴿۱۴۷﴾

(26-147) amidst gardens and springs

وَّ زُرُوۡعٍ وَّ نَخۡلٍ طَلۡعُہَا ضَیۡمٌ ﴿۱۴۸﴾

(26-148) and cornfields and date-palms laden with juicy fruits? [98]

(98) Hadim: heavy bunches of ripe, juicy and soft date-palm fruit hanging from trees.

وَ تَنۡحِتُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡ جِبَالِ بُیُوۡ تًا فٰرِہِیۡنَ ﴿۱۴۹﴾

(26-149) You hew dwellings in mountains and exult in that. [99]

(99) Just as the most prominent feature of the Aad civilization was that they built large edifices with high pillars, so the most prominent feature of the Thamud civilization for which they were known among the ancient peoples was that they carved out

dwellings in the hills. That is why in Surah Al-Fajr, the Aad have been referred to as (people) of the pillars, and the Thamud as those who hewed rocks in the valley. These people also built castles on the plains, the purpose and object of which was nothing but display of wealth and power and architectural skill as there was no real necessity for them. These are, in fact, the ways of the perverted people: the poor among them do not have proper shelters, and the wealthy members not only have sufficient fine dwellings but over and above those they raise monuments for ostentation and display.

Some of these Thamudic works exist even today, which I have seen in December, 1959. This place is situated between Al-Madinah and Tabuk, a few miles to the north of Al-Ula (Wad-il-Qura of the Prophet's time) in Hejaz. The local inhabitants call it Al-Hijr and Madain Salih even today. Al- Ula is still a green and fertile valley abounding in water springs and gardens, but Al-Hijr appears to be an abandoned place. It has thin population, little greenery and a few wells, one of which is said to be the one at which Prophet Salih's (peace be upon him) she camel used to drink water. This well is now dry and located within a deserted military post of the time of the Turks. When we entered this territory and approached Al-Ula, we found hills which seemed to have been shattered to pieces from top to bottom as if by a violent earthquake. We saw the same kind of hills while travelling to the east, from Al-Ula to Khaibar, for about 50 miles, and towards the north inside Jordan, for about 30 to 40 miles. This indicated that an area, stretching well over 300 to 400 miles in length and 100 miles in width, had been devastated by the terrible earthquake.

A few of the Thamudic type monuments that we saw at Al- Hijr were also found at Madyan along the Gulf of Aqabah and at Petra in Jordan. At Petra, specially, the Thamudic and Nabataean works stand side by side, and their styles and architectural designs are so different that anyone who examines them will find that they were neither built in the same age nor by the same nation. Doughty, the British orientalist, in his attempt to prove the Quran as false, has claimed that the works found at Al-

Hijr were not carved out by Thamud but by the Nabataeans. I am of the view that the art of carving houses out of the rocks started with the Thamud, and thousands of years later, in the second and first centuries B.C., it was considerably developed by the Nabataeans and it reached perfection in the works of the caves of Ellora, which were carved out about 700 years after Petra.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰ ۟ وَ اَطِ یۡعُوۡنِ ۱۵۰۝

(26-150) Fear Allah and obey me

وَ لَا تُطِ یۡعُ ۤا اَمۡرَ الۡ مُسۡرِفِیۡنَ ۙ ۱۵۱۝

(26:151) and do not follow the biddings of those that go to excesses

الَّذِیۡنَ یُفۡسِدُوۡنَ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ وَ لَا یُصۡلِحُوۡنَ ۱۵۲۝

(26-152) and spread mischief in the land rather than set things right." (100)

(100) That is, you should give up obedience to your chiefs, guides and rulers under whose leadership you are following an evil way of life. These people have transgressed all bounds of morality: they cannot bring about any reforms and they will corrupt every system of life that they adopt. The only way for you towards success and well-being is that you should inculcate fear of God, give up obedience to the misguided and obey me, because I am God’s Messenger. You are fully aware of my honesty and integrity. I have no personal interest and motive for undertaking the work of reform. This was in short the manifesto which Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) presented before his people. It not only contained the religious message but invitation to cultural, moral and political revolution as well.

قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّمَاۤ اَنۡتَ مِنَ الۡ مُسَحَّرِیۡنَ ۙ ۱۵۳۝

(26-153) They replied: "You are nothing but one of those who are bewitched; (101)

(101) Enchanted person, mad and insane person who has lost reasoning power. According to the ancient conceptions, madness was either due to the influence of a jinn or magic. That is why a mad person was either called majnun (one under the influence of a jinn) or one enchanted by magic.

مَآ اَنۡتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثۡلُنَا فَاۡتِ بِاٰيَةٍ اِنۡ كُنۡتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيۡنَ ﴿۱۵۴﴾

(26-154) you are no different from a mortal like us. So produce a sign if you are truthful." (102)

(102) That is, we cannot believe you to be a Messenger from God because you are just like us and we see no distinction in you. However, if you are true in your claim that God has appointed you as His Messenger, you should present such a clear miracle as should make us believe that you have really been sent by the Creator and Master of the universe.

قَالَ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةٌ لَّهَا شِرۡبٌ وَّلَكُمۡ شِرۡبُ يَوۡمٍ مَّعۡلُوۡمٍ ﴿۱۵۵﴾

(26-155) Salih said: "This is a she-camel. (103) There is a day set for her to drink and there is a day set for you to drink. (104)

(103) From the context it appears that it was not a common she-camel, but it was brought about in a supernatural manner because it was presented in response to the demand for a miracle. Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) could not have produced before the people an ordinary she-camel as a proof of his Prophethood because that would not have satisfied them. At other places in the Quran it has been clearly referred to as a miracle. In Surahs Al-Aaraf and Houd it has been said: Here is Allah's she camel, a sign for you. (Surahs Al-Araf, Ayat 73). In Surah Bani Israil the same thing has been stated more emphatically: And nothing has hindered Us from sending signs except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example) We sent the she-camel as an open sign to Thamud but

they treated her with cruelty; whereas We send signs only by way of warning. (Verse 59). Moreover, the challenge given to the wicked people of Thamud, after presenting the she-camel before them, was such that it could only be given after presenting a miracle.

(104) That is, one day the she-camel will drink water all alone at your wells and springs, and one day you and your animals will take water, and this arrangement will not be violated in any way. There could hardly be a greater challenge for the people of Arabia, for taking of water had been the foremost cause of feuds and fights among them, which mostly resulted in bloodshed, even loss of life. As such, the challenge given by Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) was indeed a challenge to the whole nation, which could not be acceptable unless the people were sure that the challenger had a great power at his back. But Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) threw this challenge all by himself without any worldly power behind him, and the whole nation not only received it quietly, but also abided by it submissively for quite some days.

In Surahs Al-Araf and Houd there is an addition to this: Here is Allah's she-camel, a sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with an evil intention. (Surah Houd, Ayat 64). That is, the challenge was not only this that the she-camel would drink water all alone every alternate day, but, in addition, she would freely move about and graze at will in their fields and gardens and palm groves and pastures and was not to be touched with an evil intention.

وَ لَا تَمَسُّوَ ا بِسُوۡءٍ فَيَّ خُذَكُمۡ عَذَابُ جَمَ مٍ عَظِيمٍ۝١٥٦

(26-156) Do not molest her lest the chastisement of an Awesome Day should seize you."

فَعَقَرُ ا فَاَ جَحُ ا نٰدِمِيَنَ۝١٥٧

(26-157) But they hamstrung her (105) and then regretted it.

(105) This does not mean that as soon as they heard the challenge, they attacked the she-camel at once and hamstrung her. Actually, when the she-camel became a problem for the whole nation, the hearts of the people were filled with rage, and they began to hold lengthy consultations as to how to get rid of her. At last, a haughty chief undertook the task of putting an end to her, as mentioned in Surah Ash-Shams thus: When arose the most villainous of the people (Verse 12), and in Surah Al-Qamar thus: They appealed to their companion; so he took up the responsibility and hamstrung her. (Verse 29).

فَاَخَذُهُمُ الۡعَذَابُ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَۃً ؕ وَ مَا کَانَ اَکۡثَرُہُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۱۵۸﴾

(26-158) So the chastisement seized them. (106) Surely there is a Sign in this, but most of them would not believe.

(106) As stated at other places in the Quran, when the shecamel was killed, Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) declared: You have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. (Surah Houd, Ayat 65). When this time limit came to an end, a shocking explosion took place in the night at about dawn, followed by a violent earthquake, which destroyed the whole nation completely. In the morning their dead bodies lay scattered here and there like dry pieces of bush trampled down by animals around an enclosure. Neither their stony castles nor their rock-hewn caves could protect them against the calamity. We sent against them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a fold-builder. (Surah Al- Qamar, Ayat 31). Consequently a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they lay lifeless in their dwellings. (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 78). At last a violent blast overtook them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them. (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 83, 84).

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَہُوَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الرَّحِیۡمُ ﴿۱۵۹﴾

(26-159) Verily Your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Most Compassionate.

كَذَّبَتۡ قَوۡمُ لُوطِ ۪ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ۱۶۰

(26-160) The people of Lot rejected the Messengers, (107) branding them liars.

(107) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 80-84); (Surah Houd, Ayats 74-83); (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 57-77); (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-75); (Surah An-Naml, Ayats 54- 58); (Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 28-35); (Surah As-Saffat, Ayats 133-138); and (Surah Al-Qamar; Ayats 33-39).

اِذۡ قَالَ لَهُمۡ اَخُوۡهُمۡ لُوۡطٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوۡنَ ۚ ۱۶۱

(26-161) Recall, when their brother Lot said to them: "Have you no fear?

اِنِّىۡ لَـكُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ اَمِيۡنٌ ۙ ۱۶۲

(26-162) I am a trustworthy Messenger to you.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيۡعُوۡنِ ۱۶۳

(26-163) So fear Allah and obey me.

وَمَاۤ اَسۡـَٔـلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ مِنۡ اَجۡرٍ ۚ اِنۡ اَجۡرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۱۶۴

(26-164) I seek of you no reward. My reward is with none but the Lord of the Universe.

اَتَاۡتُوۡنَ الذُّكۡرَانَ مِنَ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ۱۶۵

(26-165) What, of all creation will you go to (fornicate with) the males, (108)

(108) This can have two meanings. (1) Of all the creatures you have chosen males only for the purpose of gratifying your sex desires, whereas there are plenty of women in the world. (2) You alone are the people in the whole world, who go to men to satisfy the sex desires; even the animals do not resort to this. This second meaning has been explained in Surahs Al-Aaraf and Al-

Ankabut thus: Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world? (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 80).

وَ تَذَرُ ونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُ رَبُّكُ جِّ رَاَ وَاجِكُ ٰمَلاَ ثُ جَ مُ غٰوُنَو ١٦٦

(26-166) leaving aside those whom Allah has created for you as your mates.(109) Nay, you are a people that has transgressed all limits." (110)

(109) This can also have two meanings. (1) You leave your wives whom God has created for you to satisfy your sex desire and adopt unnatural ways with the males for the purpose. (2) Even with respect to your wives you do not follow the natural way but adopt unnatural ways for the gratification of your lust? This they might have been doing with the intention of family planning.

(110) That is, this is not the only vice in you; your whole lives have become corrupted and perverted, as stated in (Surah An-Naml, Ayat 54) thus: Do you commit indecent acts openly and publicly? And in (Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 29)thus: Have you become so perverted that you gratify your lust with the males, you rob travelers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies? For further details, see (E.N. 39 of Surah Al-Hijr).

قَالُ وا لَئِ رَّ جَتَ يٰلُ طُ لَتَكُ نَنَّ مِنَ ط لْ رَجِنَيـ ١٦٧

(26-167) They said: "O Lot! If you do not desist, you will be one of those expelled (from our towns)." (111)

(111) That is, you know that whosoever has spoken against us, or protested against our doings, or opposed us in any way, he has been turned out of our habitations. If you also behave like that, you too will be treated likewise. It has been stated in Surahs Al-Aaraf and An-Naml that before giving this warning to Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), the wicked people had decided to “turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious.” (Surah Al- Araf, Ayat 82).

قَالَ اِنِّیۡ لِعَمَلِکُمۡ مِّنَ الۡقَالِیۡنَ ﴿۱۶۸﴾

(26-168) He said: "I am one of those who abhor your practice.

رَبِّ نَجِّنِیۡ وَ اَهۡلِیۡ مِمَّا یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۶۹﴾

(26-169) My Lord, deliver me and my family from their wicked deeds." (112)

(112) This may also mean: My Lord, deliver us from the evil consequences of their misdeeds, and also this: Protect the children of the believers from the evil effects of the immoral acts of the wicked people.

فَنَجَّیۡنٰهُ وَ اَهۡلَهٗۤ اَجۡمَعِیۡنَ ﴿۱۷۰﴾

(26-170) Then We delivered him and all his family

اِلَّا عَجُوۡزًا فِی الۡغٰبِرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۷۱﴾

(26-171) except an old woman who was among those that stayed behind. (113)

(113) This refers to the Prophet Lot’s (peace be upon him) wife as stated in (Verse 10 of Surah At-Tahrim) about the wives of Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them): These two women were in the houses of Our two pious servants but they acted treacherously towards them. That is, they did not believe, and sided with the unbelievers instead of their righteous husbands. Therefore, when Allah decreed to send a torment on the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), He commanded the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) to leave the place along with his people but to leave his wife behind: So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind; but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet the same doom as they. (Surah Houd, Ayat 81).

ثُمَّ دَمَّرۡنَا ٱلۡأٓخَرِينَ ١٧٢

(26-172) Thereafter, We utterly destroyed the rest,

وَأَمۡطَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِم مَّطَرٗاۖ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ ٱلۡمُنذَرِينَ ١٧٣

(26-173) and We sent upon them a rain, an evil rain that fell on those who had been warned. (114)

(114) This was not a rain of water but a rain of stones. According to the details given at other places in the Quran, when Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had left the place along with the people of his household in the last hours of the night, there occurred a terrible explosion at dawn and a violent earthquake, which turned all their habitations upside down and rained on them stones of baked clay as a result of a volcanic eruption and a strong blast of wind.

Below we give a resume of the Biblical account and of ancient Greek and Latin writings and modern geological researches and archaeological observations about the torment and the place where it occurred:

The hundreds of ruins found in the waste and uninhabited land lying to the south and east of the Dead Sea indicate that this must have been a prosperous and thickly populated area in the past. The archaeologists have estimated that the age of prosperity of this land lasted between 2300 and 1900 B.C. According to historians, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) lived about 2000 B.C. Thus the archaeological evidence confirms that this land was destroyed in the time of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his nephew Prophet Lot (peace be upon him).

The most populous and fertile part of the area was the vale of Siddim as mentioned in the Bible: And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered

everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt (Gen. 13: 10). The present day scholars are of the opinion that valley is now under the Dead Sea and this opinion is supported by firm archaeological evidence. In the ancient times, the Dead Sea did not so much extend to the south as it does today. Opposite and to the west of the present Jordanian city of Al-Karak, there is a small peninsula called Al-Lisan. This was the end of the sea in ancient days. The area to the south of it, which is now under sea water was a fertile valley, the vale of Siddim, in which were situated Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, Zoar, the famous cities of the people of Lot. In about 2000 B.C. this valley sank as a result of a violent earthquake and was submerged in sea water. Even today this is the most shallow part of the Sea. In the Roman period it was more so and was fordable from Al-Lisan to the western coast. One can still see submerged jungles along the southern coast and there might as well be submerged buildings.

According to the Bible and the ancient Greek and Latin writings, the region abounded in pits of petroleum and asphalt and at places inflammable gas also existed. It appears from the geological observations that with the violent earthquake shocks, petroleum, gases and asphalt were thrown up and ignited, and the whole region exploded like a bomb. The Bible says that when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) got the news and went from Hebron to see the affected valley, he saw that the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. (Gen. 19: 28).

اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَۃً ؕ وَ مَا کَانَ اَکۡثَرُہُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۱۷۴﴾

(26-174) Surely there is a Sign in this, but most of them would not believe.

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَہُوَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الرَّحِیۡمُ ﴿۱۷۵﴾

(26-175) Verily Your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Most Compassionate.

كَذَّبَ اَصۡحٰبُ لۡـَٔيۡكَةِ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ۱۷۶

(26-176) The people of Aykah also gave the lie to the Messengers. (115)

(115) The people of Aiykah have been briefly mentioned in Verses 78-84 of Surah Al-Hijr. More about them here. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether the Midianites and the people of Aiykah were two different tribes or one and the same people. One group holds that they were different tribes and gives the argument that in Surah Al-Aaraf Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) has been brother of the Midianites (Verse 85), whereas here, with regard to the people of Aiykah, he has not been called so. The other group holds that they were one and the same people on the ground that the moral diseases and characteristics mentioned of the Midianites in Surahs Al-Aaraf and Houd are the same as of the people of Aiykah mentioned here. Then the message and admonition of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) to both the tribes was the same, and the two tribes also met the same end.
Research in this regard has shown that both the views are correct. The Midianites and the people of Aiykah were doubtless two different tribes but branches of the same stock. The progeny of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) from his wife (or slave girl) Keturah, is well known in Arabia and in the history of the Israelites as the children of Keturah. Their most prominent branch was the one which became famous as the Midianites, after their ancestor, Midian, son of Abraham. They had settled in the territory between northern Arabia and southern Palestine, and along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah. Their capital city was Madyan, which was situated, according to Abul Fida, on the western coast of the Gulf of Aqabah at five days' journey from Aiykah (present day Aqabah). The rest of the children of Keturah, among whom the Dedanites are comparatively better known, settled in the territory between Taima and Tabuk and Al-Ula in northern Arabia, their main city being Tabuk, the Aiykah of the ancient times. (Yaqut in his Mujam al-Buldan, under Aiykah, writes that this is the old name of Tabuk, and the natives of Tabuk confirm this).

The reason why one and the same Prophet was sent to the Midianites and the people of Aiykah was probably that both the tribes were descendants of the same ancestors, spoke the same language and had settled in the adjoining areas. It is just possible that they lived side by side in the same areas and had marriages and other social relations between them. Then, these two branches were traders by profession and had developed similar evil practices and social and moral weaknesses. According to the early books of the Bible, these people worshiped Baal-peor. When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt and entered their territory, they also became infected with the evils of idolatry and adultery. (Numbers, 25: 1-5, 31: 16-17). Then those people had settled on the two main international trade routes, the one joining Yaman with Syria and the other the Persian Gulf with Egypt. Due to their advantageous position they had started big scale highway robbery and would not let any caravan pass till it had paid heavy taxes. They had thus rendered these trade routes highly unsafe. Their characteristic of highway robbery has been mentioned in the Quran, for which they were admonished through Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him), thus: And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers in order to frighten the people (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 86). These were the reasons why Allah sent to both the tribes the same Prophet, who conveyed to them the same teachings and message. For the details of the story of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) and the Midianites, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 85-93); (Surah Houd, Ayats 84-95); and (Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 36-37).

لِ قَالَ لَ شُ عَ بٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ١٧٧

(26-177) Recall, when Shuayb said to them: "Have you no fear?

اِنِّیۡ لَکُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ اَمِیۡنٌ ﴿۱۷۸﴾

(26-178) I am a trustworthy Messenger to you.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰہَ وَ اَطِیۡعُوۡنِ ﴿۱۷۹﴾

(26-179) So fear Allah and obey me.

وَ مَاۤ اَسۡـَٔلُکُمۡ عَلَیۡہِ مِنۡ اَجۡرٍ ۚ اِنۡ اَجۡرِیَ اِلَّا عَلٰی رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۰﴾

(26-180) I ask of you no reward for this. My reward is with none but the Lord of the Universe.

اَوۡفُوا الۡکَیۡلَ وَ لَا تَکُوۡنُوۡا مِنَ الۡمُخۡسِرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۱﴾

(26-181) Fill up the measure and do not diminish the goods of people,

وَ زِنُوۡا بِالۡقِسۡطَاسِ الۡمُسۡتَقِیۡمِ ﴿۱۸۲﴾

(26-182) weigh with an even balance

وَ لَا تَبۡخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشۡیَآءَہُمۡ وَ لَا تَعۡثَوۡا فِی الۡاَرۡضِ مُفۡسِدِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۳﴾

(26-183) and do not deliver short, and do not go about creating mischief in the land,

وَ اتَّقُوا الَّذِیۡ خَلَقَکُمۡ وَ الۡجِبِلَّۃَ الۡاَوَّلِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۴﴾

(26-184) and have fear of Him Who created you and the earlier generations."

قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّمَاۤ اَنۡتَ مِنَ الۡمُسَحَّرِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۵﴾

(26-185) They said: "You are no more than one of those who have been bewitched,

وَ مَاۤ اَنۡتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثۡلُنَا وَ اِنۡ نَّظُنُّکَ لَمِنَ الۡکٰذِبِیۡنَ ﴿۱۸۶﴾

(26-186) you are only a mortal like us. Indeed we believe that you are an utter liar.

فَاَسۡقِطۡ عَلَيۡنَا كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اِنۡ كُنۡتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيۡنَ ﴿۱۸۷﴾

(26-187) So cause a piece of the sky to fall upon us if you are truthful."

قَالَ رَبِّىۡۤ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۸۸﴾

(26-188) Shuayb said: "My Lord knows well all what you do." (116)

(116) That is, it is not in my power to bring down the torment; it is in Allah's power, and He is fully aware of your misdeeds. He will send down the torment as and when He wills. In this demand of the people of Aiykah and the answer of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) to them there was an admonition for the Quraish as well. They also demanded from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring down the torment on them: Or.... you cause the sky to fall down on us in fragments, as you threaten us. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 92). As such the Quraish are being told that the people of Aiykah had also demanded a similar thing from their Prophet, and the answer that they got from their Prophet is the answer of Muhammad (peace be on him) to you.

فَكَذَّبُوۡهُ فَاَخَذَهُمۡ عَذَابُ يَوۡمِ الظُّلَّةِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوۡمٍ عَظِيۡمٍ ﴿۱۸۹﴾

(26-189) Then they branded him a liar, whereupon the chastisement of the Day of Canopy overtook them. (117) It was the chastisement of a very awesome day.

(117) The details of this torment are neither found in the Quran nor in any authentic tradition. What one can learn from the text is this: As these people had demanded a torment from the sky, Allah sent upon them a cloud which hung over them like a canopy and kept hanging until they were completely destroyed by

the torment of continuous rain. The Quran clearly points out that the nature of the torment sent upon the Midianites was different from that sent upon the people of Aiykah. The people of Aiykah, as mentioned here, were destroyed by the torment of the canopy, while the torment visiting the Midianites was in the form of a terrible earthquake: It so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings. (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 91). And: A dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes. (Surah Houd, Ayat 94). Therefore, it is wrong to regard the two torments as identical. Some commentators have given a few explanations of the torment of the Day of canopy, but we do not know the source of their information. Ibn Jarir has quoted Abdullah bin Abbas as saying: If somebody from among the scholars gives you an explanation of the torment of the Day of canopy, do not consider it as correct.

اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَۃً ؕ وَ مَا کَانَ اَکۡثَرُہُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۱۹۰﴾

(26-190) Surely there is a Sign in this, but most of them would not believe.

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَہُوَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الرَّحِیۡمُ ﴿۱۹۱﴾

(26-191) Verily Your Lord is Immensely Mighty, Most Compassionate.

وَ اِنَّہٗ لَتَنۡزِیۡلُ رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۹۲﴾

(26-192) Indeed this [118] is a revelation from the Lord of the Universe; [119]

(118) At the end of the historical account, the same theme, with which the Surah began, is resumed. For reference, see (Verses 1-9).

(119) That is, this lucid Book whose verses are being recited to you, and this admonition from which the people are turning away, is not the product of the whims of a man. It has not been written

and compiled by Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, but it consists of the revelations of the Lord of this universe.

نَزَلَ بِهِ ۗ الرُّوحُ لوَاَلِمِيُنۡ١٩٣

(26-193) which the truthful spirit (120) has carried down

(120) That is, Angel Gabriel, as mentioned in (Surah Al- Baqarah, Ayat 97): Say to them: Whosoever is the enemy to Gabriel, he should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed to your heart the Quran. Here the object of using the title of the trustworthy Spirit for Gabriel implies that the Quran is not being sent down by Allah through some material agency, which is subject to change and vacillation; but through a pure Spirit, having no tinge of materialism, and who is perfectly trustworthy. This Spirit conveys the messages of Allah precisely in the same form and with the same content as they are entrusted to him. It is not possible for him to tamper with the messages, or to make his own additions to them in any way.

عَلٰى قَلۡبِكَ لِتَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡمُنۡذِرِيۡنَ ١٩٤

(26-194) to your heart that you might become one of those who warn (others on behalf of Allah),

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِىٍّ مُّبِيۡنٍ ١٩٥

(26-195) (a revelation) in clear Arabic language, (121)

(121) This sentence may be related to "the trustworthy Spirit has come down" and also to: "who are (appointed by God) to warn." In the first case, it will mean that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in plain Arabic language, and in the second case, it will mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is included among those Prophets who were appointed to warn the people in the Arabic language, i.e. Houd, Salih, Ishmael and Shuaib (peace be upon them all). In both cases the object is the same: the divine

message has not been sent down in a dead or mysterious language, or in a language of riddles and enigmas, but in such clear and lucid Arabic, which can be understood easily by every Arab and every non Arab who has learned Arabic. As such, the people who are turning away from it, they cannot have the excuse that they could not understand the message of the Quran. The only reason of their denial and aversion is that they are afflicted with the same disease with which Pharaoh, the people of Abraham the people of Noah, the people of Lot, the Aad and the Thamud, and the people of Aiykah were afflicted.

وَ اِنَّ ۥ لَفِۡ زُبُرِ ٱلۡأَوَّلِينَ ١٩٦

(26-196) (a revelation embodied) in the scriptures of the ancients. (122)

(122) That is, this very admonition and divine message and teachings are contained in the former Scriptures also. The same message of submission to One God, the same belief in the Hereafter and the same invitation to follow the Prophets has been given in all those Books. All the Books sent down by God condemn shirk and the materialistic philosophy of life and invite people to accept the true and sound philosophy of life, which is based on the concept of man's accountability before God, and demands that man should give up his independence in deference to divine commands brought and preached by the Prophets. None of these things is new, which the Quran may be presenting for the first time, and none can blame the Prophet (peace be upon him) of saying something which had never been said before by the former Prophets.

Among other arguments this verse also is quoted in support of Imam Abu Hanifah's early opinion that if a person recites the translation of the Quran in the prayer, his prayer will be in order and valid, whether he is able to recite the Quran in Arabic or not. According to Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas, the basis of this argument is: Allah says that the Quran was contained in the former Scriptures also; obviously this could not be in Arabic words, As such, if translated and presented in another language,

it will still be the Quran. (Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol. III, p. 429). But the weakness of this argument is obvious. The Quran, or any other divine Book, was never revealed in a manner that Allah inspired to the Prophet with its meaning and then he presented it before the people in his own words. The fact is that every Book, in whatever language it came, was revealed in divine words and meanings together. As such, the teachings of the Quran were contained in the former Scriptures in divine words and not in human, and none of their translations could be considered as the divine Book or its representation. As regards the Quran, it has been stated over and over again that it was literally revealed in the Arabic language: We have sent it down as Quran in Arabic. (Surah Yusuf, Ayat 2). We have sent this command in Arabic to you. (Surah Ar-Rad, Ayat 37). An Arabic Quran without any crookedness. (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 28). Then just before this verse, it has been said that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in Arabic. Now how can it be said that the translation of the Quran made into another language will also be the Quran and its words will represent the words of Allah? It appears that later the Imam himself felt this weakness in the argument and, according to authentic traditions, gave up his earlier opinion, and adopted the opinion of Imams Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, who held that a person who could not recite Arabic words, could recite the translation of the Quran in his prayer till he was able to pronounce Arabic words. However, the prayer of a person, who was able to recite the Quran in Arabic, would not be valid if he recited its translation. The fact is that the two Imams had proposed this concession only for those non Arab converts who were not able to offer their prayer in Arabic immediately after embracing Islam. In this the basis of their argument was not that the translation of the Quran was the Quran itself, but that just as a person unable to perform Ruku and Sajdah was allowed to offer his prayer by making signs, so a person unable to pronounce Arabic words could recite the translation. Then just as the prayer of a person who offered it by making signs could not be valid as soon as the cause of inability was removed, so the prayer of a person who recited the translation would not be valid as soon as he became able to pronounce Arabic words. (For a detailed discussion, see Al-Mabsut by Sarkhasi,Vol. I, p. 37; Fath ul- Qadir and Sharh Inaya alal-Hedaya, Vol. I. pp. 190-201).

أَوَلَمۡ يَكُن لَّهُمۡ ءَايَةً أَن يَعۡلَمَهُۥ عُلَمَٰٓؤُاْ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ١٩٧

(26-197) Is it not a Sign to them (to wit, the Makkans) that the learned men of the Children of Israel know that? (123)

(123) That is, the learned men of the Israelites know that the teachings of the Quran are the same as of the former Scriptures. Though the people of Makkah themselves were un-initiated in the knowledge of the Book, there were many scholars among the Israelites living in the surrounding areas, who fully understood that the Quran did not bring a novel message, which was being presented by Muhammad bin Abdullah for the first time, but it was the same message which had been brought and preached by Prophets of Allah one after the other since thousands of years. Is it not then a convincing proof of the fact that the Quran has been sent down by the same Lord of the universe Who sent down the former Books.

According to Ibn Hisham's Life of the Holy Prophet, a little before the revelation of these verses a deputation of 20 men, who had been influenced by the preaching of Jaafar, came to Makkah from Habash. They met the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Masjid al-Haram and asked him in the presence of the unbelieving Quraish what his teachings were. In response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited a few verses of the Quran, whereupon tears came down from their eyes and they believed in him there and then to be a true Messenger of Allah. When they took leave of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Jahl met them along with a few other men of the Quraish and rebuked them, saying: Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men, you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith. Those gentle people did not like to have a dispute with Abu Jahl, so they left him, saying: We have no wish to enter an argument with you. You are responsible for your faith and we are for ours. We adopted something in which we saw some good for ourselves. (Vol II, p. 32). This same incident has been

mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas, thus: Those to whom We had given the Book before this, believe in the Quran and when it is recited to them, they say: We have believed in it. This is the very truth from our Lord. We were even before this followers of Islam. And when they heard vain and meaningless talk, they refrained from entering an argument, saying: For us are our deeds and for you yours, peace be to you, we do not like the ways of the ignorant. (Verse 52-55).

وَ لَ وۡ نَزَّلۡ عَلٰی بَعۡضِ الۡ اَعۡجَمِیۡنَ ۱۹۸

(26-198) (But such is their adamance) that had We revealed it to one of the non-Arabs and even if he had recited(this clear Arabic discourse) to them

فَقَرَاَ عَلَیۡ مَّا کَانُوۡا بِہٖ مُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ۱۹۹

(26-199) they would still not have believed in it.
(124)

(124) That is, now when a man from among themselves is reciting to them this divine revelation in lucid Arabic, they say that he himself has composed it, and therefore it cannot be from Allah. But if the same revelation in eloquent Arabic had been sent down by Allah to a non Arab as a miracle, and he had recited it before them in perfect Arabic accent, they would have invented some other excuse for not believing in him. They would have said that he is under the power and influence of a jinn, who speaks Arabic through a non Arab. As a matter of fact, a lover of the truth considers the thing presented before him coolly and forms an opinion about it after due thought. But an obdurate person who is unwilling to believe, pays no attention to it at all, but instead seeks all sorts of excuses to reject it, and will, in any case, invent an excuse for his denial. This obduracy of the unbelieving Quraish has been exposed over and over again in the Quran, and they have been clearly told that even if a miracle were shown to them, they would certainly have found an excuse to deny it because they are not inclined to believe: O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said:

This is nothing but manifest sorcery. (Surah Al-Anam, Ayat 7). Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it, they would have said: Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched. (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 14-15).

كَذٰلِكَ سَلَكۡنٰهُ فِىۡ قُلُوۡبِ الۡمُجۡرِمِيۡنَ ۞ ٢٠٠

(26-200) Thus have We caused this (Admonition) to penetrate the hearts of the culprits (like a hot rod). (125)

(125) That is, unlike the truth loving people to whom the Quran brings peace of the mind and heart, it passes like a hot iron rod through the hearts of the disbelievers, which sets them ill at ease, and they, instead of pondering over its themes, start looking for subterfuges to deny it.

لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِهٖ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الۡعَذَابَ الۡاَلِيۡمَ ۞ ٢٠١

(26-201) They will not believe in it until they clearly see the grievous chastisement. (126)

(126) This is the same kind of punishment which was mentioned by the nations mentioned above.

فَيَاۡتِيَهُمۡ بَغۡتَةً وَّهُمۡ لَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ۞ ٢٠٢

(26-202) But when it comes upon them suddenly, taking them unawares,

فَيَقُوۡلُوۡا هَلۡ نَحۡنُ مُنۡظَرُوۡنَ ۞ ٢٠٣

(26-203) they say: "Can we be granted some respite?" (127)

(127) That is, until the criminals are actually overtaken by the torment, they do not believe in the Prophet. Then they feel remorse and desire to be given some respite when it is too late.

اَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَ سۡتَ جۡلُونَ ﴿۲۰۴﴾

(26-204) Do they really want Our chastisement to be expedited?

اَفَرَءَيۡتَ اِن مَّتَّعۡنٰهُمۡ سِنِيۡنَ ﴿۲۰۵﴾

(26-205) Did you consider that if We were to let them enjoy life for many years

ثُمَّ جَآءَهُمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا يُوۡعَدُوۡنَ ﴿۲۰۶﴾

(26-206) and then the chastisement of which they were being warned were to come upon them,

مَاۤ اَغۡنٰى عَنۡهُمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا يُمَتَّعُوۡنَ ﴿۲۰۷﴾

(26-207) of what avail will be the provisions of life which they have been granted to enjoy? (128)

(128) There is a subtle gap between this and the preceding sentence, which the reader himself can fill with a little thinking. They were asking for the torment to be hastened because they were not sure that it would ever come. They were confident that they would continue living a life of ease and indulgence as they had been living till then. On account of the same confidence they challenged the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: If you are a Messenger of Allah, and we deserve to be chastised by Allah because we have treated you as a liar, then you should hasten that torment on us, with which you threaten us. At this it is being said: Well, even if they be right in their confidence, and the torment is not sent upon them immediately, and they are allowed a long respite to enjoy life as they expect, the question is: What will these few years of worldly pleasure and comfort avail them when the inevitable scourge from Allah overtakes them suddenly as it overtook the Aad and the Thamud, or the people of Lot and of Aiykah, or if they are visited by death which nobody can escape.

وَ مَا اَهۡلَكۡنَا مِنۡ قَرۡيَةٍ اِلَّا لَهَا مُنۡذِرُوۡنَ ۚ﴿۲۰۸﴾

(26-208) We never destroyed any habitation but that it had warners

ذِكۡرٰى وَ مَا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۲۰۹﴾

(26-209) to admonish them. We have never been unjust. (129)

(129) That is, We could not be blamed for any injustice when they did not heed the warning and admonition of the warners and were destroyed. It would have been injustice if no effort had been made to admonish them and guide them aright prior to their destruction.

وَ مَا تَنَزَّلَتۡ بِهِ الشَّيٰطِيۡنُ ﴿۲۱۰﴾

(26-210) The satans (130) did not bring down this (Clear Book),

(130) After the positive aspect as stated in (Verses 192-193), the negative aspect is being stated that the Quran has not been brought down by satans as the enemies of the truth allege. The unbelieving Quraish in their campaign to spread lies and slander against the Prophet (peace be upon him) were facing a real difficulty. They did not know how to account for the wonderful discourses which were being presented before the people in the form of the Quran and which were moving their hearts deeply. They could not stop the Quran from reaching the people. The only thing they could do to counteract its effect and influence was to create doubts and suspicions about it in their minds and hearts. Therefore, in their desperation they charged that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a sorcerer, who was being inspired by the satans, and they considered this charge of theirs to be the most effective because it could neither be easily verified nor refuted.

وَ مَا يَنۡۢبَغِيۡ لَهُمۡ وَ مَا يَسۡتَطِيۡعُوۡنَ ﴿۲۱۱﴾

(26-211) nor does it behove them, [131] nor does it lie in their power. [132]

(131) That is, these revelations and themes do not at all suit the satans. Any person who has a little common sense can well understand that the sublime discourses being presented in the Quran cannot be inspired by the satans. Never has it happened that the satans might have taught the people through the sorcerers to worship God and fear Him, or forbidden them from shirk and idol-worship, or warned them of the accountability of the Hereafter, or prohibited them from tyranny and sexual and moral evils, and exhorted them instead to act righteously and do good to others. Such works cannot behoove the satans. Their only pastime can be to sow the seeds of discord among the people and to arouse them to mischief and vice. The common observation is that people visit the sorcerers to find out whether they will succeed in their love affairs or not, what move would suit them in gambling, what trick and stratagem would be helpful against the enemy, or who had stolen the camel of so and so. Apart from such affairs and problems, the sorcerers and their patron-saints cannot be expected to worry themselves about matters like reforming the people, teaching them morals and cleansing their lives of vice and evil.

(132) That is, even if the satans wanted they could not impart truth and goodness to the people like a true teacher and reformer as the Quran does. Even if to deceive the people, they came out under the guise of a benefactor, their work would not be tree from blemishes, which would betray their ignorance and their hidden satanic nature. Similarly the life and the teachings of a person who poses to be a religious guide, under the influence and inspiration of satans, would inevitably reflect the wickedness of intention and design. Thus the satans can neither inspire others with piety and goodness, nor can those, who have any relation with the satans, become pious and righteous themselves. Then in addition to its high and noble teachings, the Quran is a lucid and eloquent Book, which contains the knowledge of reality. That is why it has over and over again put forward the challenge that

human beings and jinns would never be able to produce a book like the Quran even if they collaborated with all their energies and capacities. Declare this: Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to bring forth a book like the Quran, they will never be able to bring anything like it, even though all of them help one another (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 88).

Tell them: if what you say be true, then produce one Surah like this, and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 38).

اِنَّهُمۡ عَنِ السَّمۡعِ لَمَعۡزُوۡلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۱۲﴾

(26-212) Indeed they are debarred from even hearing it. (133)

(133) That is, not to speak of interfering with the revelation of the Quran, the satans are not even given a chance to hear the Quran any moment from the time Angel Gabriel receives it from Allah till he reveals it to the heart of the Prophet. They are so kept out of its hearing that they cannot get any hint as to its words and contents so as to tell their friends that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to give such and such a message to his followers, or that his address would contain such and such a thing that day. For further details see (E.Ns 8-12 of Surah Al-Hijr), (E.Ns 5-7 of Surah As-Safat)and (Surah Jinn, Ayats 8-9,27).

فَلَا تَدۡعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡمُعَذَّبِيۡنَ ﴿۲۱۳﴾

(26-213) So do not call any other god beside Allah lest you become of those who will be punished, (134)

(134) This does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to be involved in shirk from which he was to be admonished to desist. The object was to warn the disbelievers and polytheists to the effect: As the message of the Quran is based on pure truth revealed by the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and there is no tinge of any satanic impurity in it, there could be no question of showing a favor to somebody in regard to

the truth. Even if the Messenger (peace be upon him) himself, who is nearest to Allah and His most beloved servant, deviated a little from the path of His obedience and invoked any other deity than Allah, he could not escape the punishment. When it was so in the case of the Prophet, who else could have the hope that after committing shirk with regard to Allah, he would be able to escape the punishment or help others to escape it.

وَ اَ نۡذِ عَشِیۡرَتَکَ الۡاَ قۡرَبِیۡنَ ﴿۲۱۴﴾

(26-214) and warn your nearest kinsmen; (135)

(135) Just as there could be no concession or favor for the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a matter concerning Allah's religion, so there could be no question of a favor being shown to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) family or his nearest kinsfolk. Here the case of everybody will be judged on merit, and nobody will be shown any favor on account of his ancestry or relation with somebody else. The accountability of the Hereafter and punishment for deviation and misdeeds are the same for everybody and even the Prophet's (peace be upon him) nearest kinsfolk are no exception. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to warn his relatives and kindred to attain the right belief and to act righteously because they would not escape punishment only by virtue of being his relations.

There are authentic traditions to show that after the revelation of this verse, the Prophet (peace be upon him) first of all addressed the sons and daughters of his grandfather. Calling each one of them by name, he said: O children of Abdul Muttalib, O Abbas, O Safiah, paternal aunt of Allah's Messenger, O Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad! You are warned to beware and save yourselves from the torment of the Hell-Fire. I cannot protect you from Allah's punishment. You may, however, demand whatever you like from my worldly property. Then as was the custom in Arabia, to warn the people of an impending calamity, he stood on top of Mount Safa one morning and called out: O people of Quraish, O children of Kaab bin Luayy, O children of Murrah, O children of Qasayy, O children of Abd Manaf, O children of Abd

Shams, O children of Hashim, O children of Abdul Muttalib, and in this way he called out each branch and clan of the Quraish by name. When all the people had come together, he said: O People, if I tell you that on the other side of this hill, there is a huge army ready to attack you, will you believe my word? With one voice they replied in the affirmative, saying that they had never heard a lie from him in the past. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Well, I warn you of the impending scourge of Allah. Save yourselves from His punishment. I cannot be of any help to you against Him. On the Day of Resurrection, the only righteous will be nearest to me. Let it not happen that others should come forth with good deeds and you should appear with the burden of sins on your heads. Then you will call me for help, but I shall be constrained to turn my face away from you. Of course, here in this world, I am bound to you by blood relations, and I shall treat you with all possible politeness as a good relation should. (Several traditions on this subject have been reported in Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmizi, Ibn Jarir on the authority of Aishah, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Abbas, Zubair bin Amr and Qabisah bin Makhariq).

The matter was not simply this that on receipt of the command to warn your nearest kinsfolk, the Prophet (peace be upon him) called together all his relatives and complied with it. In fact, the principle it meant to stress was that in the matter of religion the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his relations enjoyed no special privilege of which the other people might be deprived. What was harmful for one man was harmful for everybody. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was supposed to first protect himself from this and then warn his nearest kinsfolk and the common people of its fatal consequences. On the other hand, what was good and beneficial for one man was good and beneficial for all. As such, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should first adopt it himself and then exhort his relatives also to adopt it, so that everybody may see that the Prophet does not only preach his message to others but also practices it himself sincerely. The Prophet (peace be upon him) followed this principle throughout his life. On the conquest of Makkah, when he entered the city, he declared: Every kind of interest payable from the people during

the age of ignorance, is trampled under my feet, and first of all, I remit the interest payable to my uncle Abbas." (It should be noted that before the prohibition of interest, Abbas traded money on interest, and a substantial amount of interest payable to him at that time was outstanding against the people). Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered cutting off of the hand of a Quraishite woman, named Fatimah, on the charge of theft, Usamah bin Zaid came to intercede for her, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: By God, even if Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, had committed the theft, I would have ordered amputation of her hand, too.

وَ ا خۡفِضۡ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۝٢١٥

(26-215) and be meek to the believers who follow you.

فَاِنۡ عَصَوۡكَ فَقُلۡ اِنِّىۡ بَرِىۡٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ۝٢١٦

(26-216) Then if they disobey you say to them: "I am quit of what you do." (136)

(136) This can have two meanings.

(1) Treat those of your relatives with kindness, who have believed in you and followed your teachings practically; as for those who have not accepted your message, you may declare that you are not responsible for what they do.

(2) You should treat with kindness every such person, who believes in and obeys you, and you should warn every unbeliever that you take no responsibility for his actions. This verse shows that at that time there were some people among the Quraish and the neighboring Arabs, who had believed in the truth of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) message; but they had not as yet started obeying his teachings practically. They were still, as usual, living the same life of unbelief among their people as were the other unbelievers. Allah set apart such believers from those true believers who after belief had adopted

total obedience of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Command to treat with kindness was meant only for the latter group. As for those who had turned away from his obedience, and who included both those who believed in the truth of his message and those who rejected it, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was instructed to disown them, and tell them plainly that they themselves were responsible for their deeds, and that after giving them the warning he was not at all responsible for what they did.

وَ تَوَكَّ لۡ عَلَى الۡعَزِيۡزِ الرَّحِيۡمِ ﴿۲۱۷﴾

(26-217) And put your trust in Him Who is Immensely Mighty, Most Compassionate, (137)

(137) That is, you should not care at all for any worldly power, howsoever big and strong, but should continue to perform your mission with complete trust in that Being Who is Mighty as well as Merciful. He is Mighty and, therefore, anybody enjoying His support, cannot be overcome by any other power; He is Merciful and, therefore, He will not let go waste the sacrifices and efforts of the one who struggles for the sake of raising His Word in the world.

الَّذِیۡ یَرٰىکَ حِیۡنَ تَقُوۡمُ ﴿۲۱۸﴾

(26-218) Who observes you when you rise (to pray) (138)

(138) "Stand up" may mean getting up for the Prayers during the night, or coming out for the purpose of performing the Prophetic mission.

وَ تَقَلُّبَکَ فِی السّٰجِدِیۡنَ ﴿۲۱۹﴾

(26-219) and observes your movements among those who prostrate themselves. (139)

(139) This can have several meanings.

(1) Allah watches you when in the congregational Prayers you stand and sit and perform Ruku and Sajdah with your followers behind you.

(2) He watches you when you get up in the night to see what your companions (whose mark of distinction is that they prostrate themselves in worship) are doing for their own well-being in the Hereafter.

(3) He is fully aware of how you and your companions are endeavoring to reform the people.

(4) He is fully aware of all your efforts to revolutionize the lives of the people who prostrate themselves in worship; He knows what sort of training you are giving them to reform them; how have you purified their lives and transformed them into the best people.

These characteristics of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions have a special significance in the context here. In the first place, the Prophet (peace be upon him) deserves Allah's mercy and His support for Allah, being All-Hearing and All-Knowing, is fully aware of the struggle he is waging for His cause and of the efforts he is making to reform his companions. Secondly, when a person is living such a noble life as Muhammad (peace be upon him) is actually living, and the

characteristics of his followers are those which Muhammad's (peace be upon him) companions have, only an ignorant person can have the boldness to say that he is inspired by the satans, or that he is a poet. People are fully aware of the lives of the sorcerers who are inspired by the satans and also of the poets and their admirers living among them. Can anybody honestly say that there is no difference whatsoever between the noble life being led by Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions and the sort of life being led by the poets and the sorcerers. Then, what is it if not sheer impudence that the former are openly being branded as poets and sorcerers without any shame.

اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡعَلِیۡمُ ﴿۲۲۰﴾

(26-220) He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

هَلۡ اُنَبِّئُکُمۡ عَلٰی مَنۡ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّیٰطِیۡنُ ﴿۲۲۱﴾

(26-221) O people, shall I tell you on whom it is that satans descend?

تَنَزَّلُ عَلٰی کُلِّ اَفَّاکٍ اَثِیۡمٍ ﴿۲۲۲﴾

(26-222) They descend on every forgerer steeped in sin, (140)

(140) This implies the sorcerers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and conjurers who pose as knower of the unseen and tell the people their future, or as wise men who have control over jinns and spirits and can make the destinies of the people through them.

یُّلۡقُوۡنَ السَّمۡعَ وَاَکۡثَرُہُمۡ کٰذِبُوۡنَ ﴿۲۲۳﴾

(26-223) on those who whisper hearsay in the ears of people; and most of them are liars. (141)

(141) This may have two meanings. (1) The satans somehow get a little hint of the truth and inspire their agents with it, mixing it with all kinds of falsehood. (2) The deceitful, unscrupulous sorcerers hear something from the satans and then mixing it with falsehood, whisper it into the people's ears. This has been explained in a tradition which Bukhari has quoted on the authority of Aishah. She says that when some people asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about sorcerers, he replied that they were nothing. They said: O Messenger of Allah, they, sometimes, tell the right thing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: That right thing is overheard by the jinns who whisper it into their friend's ear, who concocts a story by mixing a lot of falsehood in it.

وَ الشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿۲۲۴﴾

(26-224) As for poets, only the wayward follow them. (142)

(142) That is, the people who follow and accompany the poets, are wholly different in their characteristics, habits and temper from those who follow and accompany Muhammad (peace be upon him). The difference between the two groups is so obvious that one group can be easily distinguished from the other. On the one side, there are the people who are characterized by the high seriousness, civilized and gentle behavior, righteousness and fear of God, sense of responsibility and a high regard for the rights of others. People who are fair and just in their dealings, who do not utter a word except in the cause of goodness, who have a high and pure ideal before them, which they pursue with single-minded devotion and for whose attainment they expend all their energies and capabilities. On the other side, there are the people whose only pastime is to portray erotic scenes of love and wine-drinking, mocking and jesting, satirizing and eulogizing, or to arouse feelings of hatred and enmity and vengeance against others, or to describe charms of unchaste women to the brothel or of chaste ladies in the houses, only for the sake of pleasing the people and winning their applause. From the crowds who throng the poetic sessions and follow the famous poets, one cannot help

forming the impression that those people are free from every moral restriction, who have no object in life except to gratify the lusts of the flesh like animals, and who have no idea whatever of the higher and nobler ideals and ends of life. The person who cannot see the obvious difference between the two types is indeed blind. But if in spite of seeing and knowing the difference, only for the purpose of suppressing the truth, he says that Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions are no different from the poets and their followers, he is not only a liar but has also transgressed all bounds of modesty and decency.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾

(26-225) Do you not see that they wander about in every valley (143)

(143) That is, they follow no fixed pattern for their thought and speech but wander aimlessly in every valley. Every new impulse makes them take up a new theme regardless as to whether it has any truth in it or not. Under one momentary impulse they would start uttering wise things; under another they would give expression to filthy and base feelings. If they felt pleased with somebody, they would exaggerate his praises, and if they felt offended by him, they would condemn him and run him down to hell. If they had a selfish motive, attached with somebody, they would feel no hesitation in giving preference to a miserly person over a generous person and to a cowardly person over a gallant person. On the contrary, if they felt displeased with somebody, they would not feel any shame in blotting his character and ridiculing him and his ancestors. That is why, one can find God-worship and atheism, materialism and spiritualism, morality and immorality, piety and filthiness, seriousness and jesting, eulogy and satire expressed side by side in the poetry of one and the same poet. A person who is aware of these well known characteristics of the poets cannot reconcile himself to charging the recipient of the Quran with poetry, whose every discourse and word is clear and precise, whose objective is clearly defined, and who has never in his life uttered a word deviating in any way from the path of truth, righteousness and virtue.

At another place in the Quran, it has been stated that poetry is not suited to the temperament of the Prophet: (peace be upon him). We have not taught him poetry, nor does it suit him. (Surah Ya Sin, Ayat 69). And this fact was well known to the people who had any personal acquaintance with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Authentic traditions show that he could not recite a complete verse from memory. If ever during conversation he remembered of a good verse of some poet, he would recite it without much care and regard for its meter and order of words.

Once Aishah was asked whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever made use of poetic verses in his discourses. She replied that he hated poetic verses the most, though sometimes he would recite a verse of a poet of Bani Quais, but in so doing he would unconsciously change the order of its words. When Abu Bakr corrected him, he would say: Brother, I am not a poet, nor composing poetry is my object. Arabic poetry abounded in themes of sex and love romances, wine drinking, tribal hatreds and feuds, ancestry pride and vanity and made little or no mention of pure and noble themes. It was so saturated with falsehood, exaggeration, false accusations, undue praise, vanity, satiric invectives, jesting and polytheistic obscenities that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once remarked: It is better that the interior of one of you be filled with pus than with poetic verses. However, if there was something good in a verse, he would appreciate it, and say: Some verses are based on wisdom. When he heard the verses of Umayyah bin Abi-Salt, he said: His verse is a believer but his heart a disbeliever. Once a companion recited a hundred or so good verses before him, and he went on urging him to recite more.

وَ اَنَّهُمۡ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ مَا لَا يَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۲۶﴾

(26-226) and say things which they do not act upon, (144)

(144) This characteristic of the poets was just the antithesis of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) conduct and practice.

Everybody knew that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said what he practiced and practiced what he said. The fact that there was complete conformity between his word and deed could not be denied by anybody. On the contrary, everyone was well aware that the poets said one thing and practiced just the opposite of it. For instance, they would express noble themes of generosity, indifference to worldly wealth, contentment and self-respect in their poetry, but, in practical life, they would turn out to be extremely stingy and cowardly, avaricious and selfish. They would find fault with others on trifles, but would themselves be involved in grave moral weaknesses.

اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَ ذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّ انْتَصَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوْا ؕ وَ سَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْۤا اَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ ۲۲۷﴿

(26-227) except those who believed and acted righteously and remembered Allah much, and when they themselves were subjected to wrong, they exacted retribution no more than to the extent of the wrong? (145) Soon will the wrong-doers know the end that they shall reach. (146)

(145) Here those poets have made an exception from the general reproach, who possess the following four characteristics:

(1) They should be believers in Allah, His Prophets, His Books and the Hereafter.

(2) They should be pious in practical life and not sinners, nor free from moral restrictions to say whatever they like.

(3) They should be remembering Allah much in their day to day lives as well as in their literary work. It should not be so that their personal lives reflect God consciousness and piety, but their poetry is replete with themes of debauchery and lusts of the flesh, or that their poetry is full of serious themes of wisdom and God consciousness, but their personal lives are devoid of any trace of the remembrance of Allah. As a matter of fact, both these states are equally despicable. A good poet is he who is God conscious in his personal life and whose poetic talent and skills also are devoted to the advancement of the way of life followed by the God conscious, God fearing and God worshiping people.

(4) They should not satirize others for personal reasons, nor take vengeance on others on account of personal, racial and national prejudices, but when they are required to support the truth, they should use their literary powers like weapons of war against the unjust and treacherous people. It does not behoove the believers to adopt a humble, supplicating attitude against injustice and oppression. Traditions show that when the unbelieving and mushrik poets raised a storm of false accusations against Islam and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and spread the poison of hatred against the Muslims, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged and encouraged the poets of Islam to

counter attack them. Once he said to Kaab bin Malik: Satirize them, for, I swear by God in Whose hand is my soul, your verse will be more effective and damaging for them than the arrow. Likewise he said to Hassan bin Thabit: Deal with them and Gabriel is with you. And: Say and the Holy Spirit is with you. (This statement should be taken as when Hassan bin Thabit would say his poetry to refute the poetry of the disbelievers, Allah's help will be with him and an angel (Gabriel) will stand next to him and refute along with him). Once he said: The believer fights with the sword as well as with the tongue.

(146) "Those who do wrong": The people who out of sheer obduracy calumniated the Prophet (peace be upon him) of being a sorcerer, poet and a mad and enchanted man, in order to defeat Islam, and to confuse the other people and distract them from his message and invitation.